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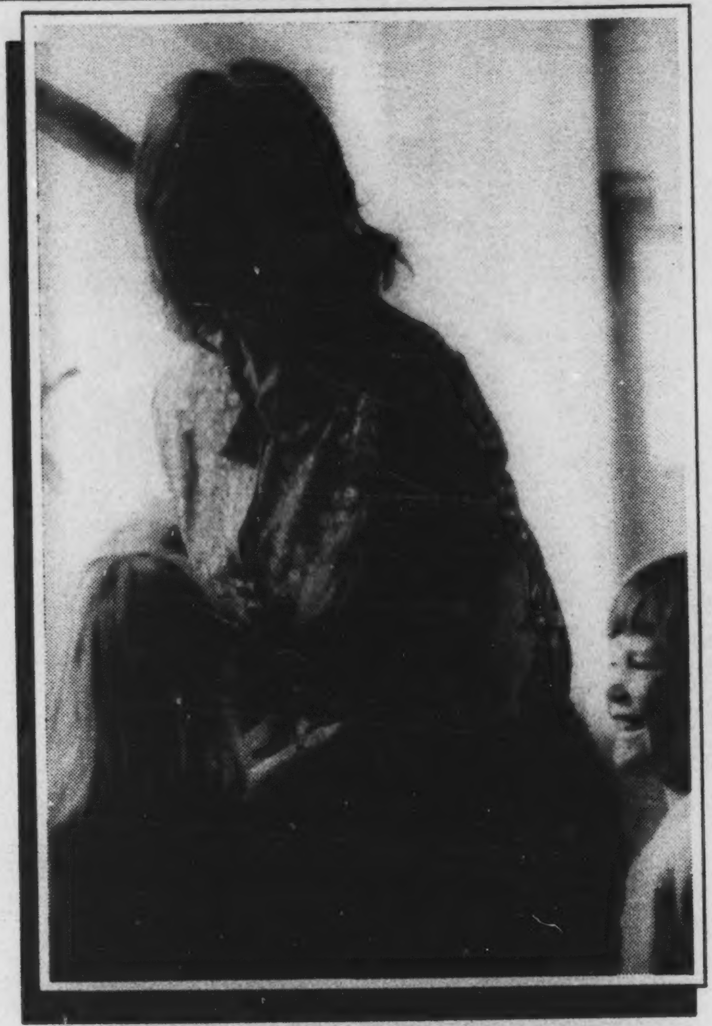
ABSTRACT

This study presents findings from the second phase of a longitudinal study of teacher education, based on interviews with 105 students in their second year of training at three colleges of education (Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch) in New Zealand. The study investigated students' perceptions of their second year of training, their performance, and factors in student performance. Extensive use is made of direct quotations from students' interviews, and a series of student profiles is offered to give a more rounded view of individual students. Findings indicate that more than 80 percent of students were either as motivated or more motivated to be primary school teachers than when they began the course; students commented favorably on courses where there was a clear link between theory and practice and where the course was taught in a practical manner; students regarded their teaching practice experiences as the most valuable part of the course; and students' main concern about college assessment procedures was that assessment should assist their learning and give them a valid credential at the end of the course. Appendices report on those students who left college before completing their training, unsuccessful applicants to teacher training, reasons why students chose particular courses, college policies on assessment, and university courses taken by college students. (Contains 18 references.) (JDD)

ED 370 908

WINDOWS ON TEACHER EDUCATION

Student progress through Colleges of Education



Phase 2 The Second Year

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Margery Renwick
June Vize

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4

CONTENTS

Page

PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE vii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS vii

INTRODUCTION 1
- Student Profiles and Quotations 3
- Aims of the Study 4
- Research Objectives for Phase 2 4
- Summary of Main Findings 5

METHODOLOGY 9
- The Sample 9
- Data Collection 9
- The Interviews 10
- Consultation With the Colleges 10
- Students Who Left College Before Completing Their Training and Unsuccessful Applicants to Teacher Training in 1989 10

THE COLLEGE PROGRAMME 13
- Students' Overall Impressions of Their Second Year of Teacher Education 13
- The College Courses 21
  - Background 21
  - The Balance of Compulsory and Optional Courses 25
  - Why Students Chose Particular Courses or Units of Study 31
  - The Most Useful Courses 32
- Co-ordination Between Teaching Experience and the College Programme 37
- General 47

STUDENT PROFILES 1 AND 2 51

Page

STUDENTS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT 61
- Student Skills Which Still Need To Be Developed: Areas Where Student Confidence Has Most Increased 61
- Could Students Cope in the Classroom If the Course Finished Tomorrow? 66
- A College View of What Makes a 'Good Teacher' 68
- Do Lecturers Present a Coherent, Co-ordinated View of How Children Learn? 71
- Student Views on How Children Learn 75
- The Main Influences on Students' Teaching Style 80
- Are Students More or Less Motivated to Teach Than When They Began the Course? 83

STUDENT PROFILES 3 AND 4 89

STUDENT ASSESSMENT - GENERAL ISSUES AND PARTICULAR PROBLEMS 97
- General Issues 97
- Particular Problems 104
- Other Comments on Assessment 106

EQUITY ISSUES 113
- Have the Students' Views Changed 113
- How the Colleges Are Addressing the Various Equity Issues 119

SCHOOL REFORMS 131

UNIVERSITY STUDY 135

STUDENT PROFILES 5 AND 6 139

IMPRESSIONS OF GRADUATE STUDENTS 149
- Length of Course 149
- Group Interviews of Graduate Students 152

Page

Graduate Students' Reactions to Various Departments 170

STUDENT FINANCES 173

CONCLUSION 175

BIBLIOGRAPHY 183

APPENDICES
- Appendix 1: Report on Those Students Who Left College Before Completing Their Training 187
- Appendix 2: Unsuccessful Applicants to Teacher Training 1989 190
- Appendix 3: Checklist of Reasons Why Students Chose Particular Courses 193
- Appendix 4: College Policies on Assessment 194
- Appendix 5: University Courses Taken by College Students 216

TABLES

Table Page

1 The Balance of Optional and Compulsory Courses 25
2 Most Useful Courses 33
3 Co-ordination of Teaching Experience With College Programme 38
4 Student Responses on the College View of What Makes a Good Teacher 69
5 Student Views on Whether Lecturers Present a Coherent, Co-ordinated View of How Children Learn 72
6 Students' Motivation to Teach 84
7 Changes in Students' Views on Equity Issues 114
8 Number of Students Interviewed Undertaking University Study 135
9 Number of Students Interviewed After Leaving College 188
10 Response Rate by College 191

DIAGRAMS

Diagram Page

1 Tension Between Theory and Practice 48
2 Students' Perceived Weaknesses and Areas of Increased Confidence 62
3 Main Influences on Students' Teaching Style 81

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INTRODUCTION

This study presents findings from the second phase of a longitudinal study of teacher education. The material included in it is based largely on data collected from students in our interview sample now in their second year of training at three colleges of education, Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch.

We have had problems in knowing how best to write up the material collected from students, particularly as we are working in three colleges. If we record the students' perceptions by college, there would be considerable repetition. On the other hand, if we report student reactions across colleges, we would give the impression that the experience students have in the three colleges is largely the same. There are, however, differences between colleges which are sufficiently important to be recorded. We have decided, therefore, to discuss some issues across colleges and others by college.

The study is a longitudinal one attempting to look at teacher education 'as it unfolds over time'. There is a problem with this methodological approach in a period of rapid change, both because of external pressures and because of the constant revision of courses by staff in an attempt to improve the experience of students.

We have continued with the use of the title of the first report, recognizing that we have been able to present only limited and incomplete glimpses as seen by the students in our sample through various frames. As the study has progressed, we have become even more aware of the limitations of our data because of the changes taking place in each of the colleges. This is particularly marked in Auckland with changes to the conjoint B.Ed. degree now being undertaken by all trainees entering a course of teacher training, and in Christchurch because of major staff changes. Our data could more properly be described as a 'still' or snapshot, taken at a fixed point in time. Nevertheless, we are still confident that most of the issues we raise are of continuing relevance to those concerned with teacher education, and that changes to the structure of programmes do not necessarily change the perennial issues of how best to prepare trainees for the classroom - they may indeed make them more pertinent.

We are aware, too, that an account written on the basis of student perceptions and accounts of their experience is necessarily incomplete. There are other wider contexts within which students' views need to be placed if some of the issues they raise are to be discussed realistically with college lecturers, heads of departments, and senior management.

We are confident that our representative sample allows us to generalize across the cohort as a whole. There were cases, however, when the number of students making a particular criticism was small. Small numbers, added to the fact that most of our data was qualitative, did not always allow us to quantify student reactions. However, even a low number of students making a particular comment does not mean that the criticism should not be taken notice of. Students at the college have all been selected on the basis that they had the potential to make satisfactory classroom teachers. The college has a responsibility to ensure that they are all given the opportunity to complete their training and prepare for the classroom, although some may prove or decide themselves that they are unsuitable. One perceptive comment may be of more potential use to the college than a widely shared opinion which merely repeats a criticism of which the college is already aware.

While protecting the anonymity of each student's responses, we have seen it as important to report as much information back to the staff at the colleges as soon as we were in a position to do so - although it is difficult to fit such sessions into a complex and busy college timetable. It is clear from the responses we have received from staff at the colleges that they value the opportunity to be informed about student responses - warts and all - to their courses. These discussions have invariably broadened our understanding of conditions and circumstances that students could not be expected to be aware of and have helped us to clarify our own views. Many of the matters we have reported to them have confirmed changes that a college had already decided to make to its first- or second-year course. Information from our research also strengthened their resolve to make changes that had been under consideration. In addition, we have raised issues of which one or other of the colleges was either unaware or had failed to realize the strength of student criticism.

This research project has now passed its midway point. For most of our interview sample - 105 students - this report records their views half way through the second year of their three-year course. For the graduating students in our sample, it records their views at the end of the second year of their two-year college course, and we have devoted a chapter to their views. Next year we hope to report on the experience of the three-year trainees during their final year of training and the following year to comment on their views of their college course seen in retrospect in the light of their initial classroom experience.

Student Profiles and Quotations

When research data are analyzed according to questions asked of respondents it is easy to lose sight of the individuals who make up a study. We have included in this report a series of student profiles in order to give a more rounded view of·

individual students. For similar reasons we have made extensive use of direct quotations from students. For the student profiles, we selected students from the three colleges in the study, although individual colleges are not identified, and included both male and female students from different ethnic backgrounds. For the second-year student profiles, we used the same students as those chosen in the first year. These are the reactions of individual students and cannot be regarded as representative of the views and experiences of the whole group.

The students concerned had the opportunity to read and comment on the profiles based on their interviews and they are published with their consent. Those lecturers who also read the draft document occasionally questioned the accuracy of some of the students' comments. We have left the statements as they stand because, rightly or wrongly, they are the students' perceptions of their experience.

Aims of the Study

The aims of the study are:

1. To record the progress of a sample of students through their training and out into the classroom.

2. To establish those factors which contribute to variations in student progress through their course of training.

3. To isolate 'key events' in a student's experience which influence their later progress as a student and teacher.

Research Objectives for Phase 2

The issues to be investigated and reported on are:

1. Students' perceptions of their second year of training.

2. The performance of our sample of students during the second year of their course of teacher education in terms of the assessment the colleges themselves make of those students.

3. Those factors which appear to contribute towards variations in student performance.

Summary of Main Findings

These generalizations are based on interviews of 105 second-year students which took place in 1990 at the Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch Colleges of Education.

* More than 80% of students across all colleges are either as motivated or more motivated to be a primary school teacher, than when they began the course. This is frequently because of their increased confidence in the classroom and the pleasure they have had working with children.

* Many students in Wellington and Christchurch (particularly Christchurch) thought the second-year programme was an improvement on the first year, usually because they considered courses to be more relevant for the classroom. In Auckland, where most students had been more enthusiastic than those in other colleges about their first-year programme, they tended to be less positive about their second-year programme.

* Students commented favourably on courses where there was a clear link between theory and practice and where the course was taught in a practical manner with plenty of opportunity to develop resources for the classroom.

* Most students are more comfortable in the 'teacher role' than when they began the course. They have increased confidence with individual children and small groups but also in their ability to 'just get up in front of a class'.

* In their second year of training, the majority of students did not think 'the college' had articulated a view of what makes a 'good teacher'. Students themselves

emphasize the need for a good teacher to possess certain personal attributes and to be a good manager within the classroom. They rarely refer to teachers needing to be well informed about curriculum content.

- Most students have changed their views as to how children learn. The most common change is a move to being more aware of children as learners rather than themselves as teachers.

- In all colleges students thought their courses in reading, mathematics, and physical education would be the three most useful to them as classroom teachers. This was usually because of the way they were taught in the college and the perceived importance of the subject in primary school classrooms.

- In all colleges, most students regarded their teaching practice experiences in schools as the most valuable part of the course and would like more practical experience. Many students consider their associate teachers to be the most important influence on their teaching style.

- All students in all colleges believe they have increased confidence in particular curriculum areas and in aspects of classroom practice. If students believe they still have weaknesses in particular curriculum areas the most frequently mentioned are mathematics, music, and science. Mathematics, however, is also the subject where many students feel their confidence has most increased.

- When students were questioned about the college assessment procedures, their main concern was that assessment should assist their learning and give them a valid credential at the end of the course.

- As well as 'broadening their horizons', students feel that their university courses will be directly useful to them in a primary school classroom.

- The majority of students who are not taking university courses say that this is because of the extra fees and expenses involved.

- The majority of graduate students completing their two-year course of training thought that the length of the course was right, although all of them believed that the content of the course and the way it was organized could be improved.

METHODOLOGY

The Sample
Of the original sample of 107 students who were interviewed in their first year (1989), 19 were not available to be interviewed in this, their second year. We randomly chose substitutes for each student from the original cohort who had completed the questionnaires. Seventeen substitutes were interviewed to give us a total sample of 105 students, across the three colleges (Auckland 38, Wellington 34, Christchurch 33).

Data Collection
Primary collection of data was from face-to-face interviews with the sample described above. The interviews provided us with the in-depth qualitative data of student reaction to the second year of the course that we were seeking. In addition to the face-to-face interviews, we also conducted group interviews of those graduate students completing a two-year course of training. We decided to hold the group interviews because of the small number of graduate students in our two-year course sample. Whilst the sample is representative of the total cohort, actual numbers of any sub-group of students are necessarily small. (For further information about the group interviews of graduate students, *see* p.152 ff.)

The Interviews

In the first year we had interviewed students half way through the year. We did the same in the second year. Where possible, students were interviewed by the same interviewers they had had the year before.

The interview schedule was designed to collect information about

- students' general impressions of the college
- the college course
- assessment
- university study
- reaction of graduating students
- professional development
- equity issues.

Students were also asked to complete a pre-interview questionnaire which collected additional information about

- college objectives
- use of time
- finances.

Consultation With the Colleges

The process of consultation with the colleges has continued. Report-back sessions to staff have been held in all of the colleges, and to students at Christchurch and Wellington. In all colleges, members of most individual departments were able to discuss with us the student reaction to their particular courses. All written material has been sent to the colleges for comment before being released publicly.

Students Who Left College Before Completing Their Training and Unsuccessful Applicants to Teacher Training in 1989

Samples from both of these groups were contacted as part of our study. Because of the low response rates from both groups, no conclusions could be drawn from the data. The Advisory Committee for the project recommended not to continue with these parts of the project. Details of what was done are contained in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

THE COLLEGE PROGRAMME

Students' Overall Impressions of Their Second Year of Teacher Education

At the beginning of our interviews of second-year students we asked them to give an overall reaction as to how they were finding the college in their second year. We also asked them what they thought the college did well and what they thought the college did poorly. What follows is a summary by college of the student impressions.

Auckland

The students' overall reaction to the college as second-year students can be divided into the following broad categories:

* General pleasure at being a student:
  - the college has a friendly atmosphere
  - it is a good place to meet other people
  - staff are supportive.

About half of the students made comments that could be categorized in this way.

* General frustration, contributed to by:
  - time wasted
  - timetabling frustrations
  - lecture contact hours being too few
  - lack of challenge in college programme
  - too much 'busy work'; for some students this view

was linked to assessment and the issue of quantity versus quality.

About half of the students made comments that could be categorized in this way.

- Variation by department:
  - departments vary considerably in their effectiveness
  - the courses in some departments had improved in the second year
  - a few departments were singled out for criticism.

About a quarter of the students made comments that could be categorized in this way.

- A few students referred to other issues, for example, a feeling that the introduction of the B.Ed. degree in 1990 had penalized those students who entered in 1989. Others affirmed the value of teaching practice.

☐ What the College Does Well

Not surprisingly, when we asked students what things they thought the college did well and what things they thought the college did poorly, they often made comments similar to those already made when they gave their overall reaction to the college. Their comments about those things they thought the college did well tended to fall into one of three broad categories:

- The range and quality of courses:
  - this depends on individual departments and lecturers
  - the best lecturers are excellent
  - the best courses are well run and practical and provide students with good classroom resources.

About two-thirds of the students made comments that could be categorized in this way.

- The college provides a supportive learning environment:
  - lecturers are friendly, take an interest in

students, and are always willing to help.

About a quarter of the students made comments that could be categorized in this way.

* The personal development of students:
  - the college encourages the personal development of students by increasing their self-esteem and helping them to develop into well-rounded individuals.

About a quarter of the students made comments that could be categorized in this way.

☐ What the College Does Poorly

The students' comments tended to fall into one of four categories:

* College organization:
  - there are too many layers of administration
  - communication within the college is poor
  - there is a lack of co-ordination within and between departments.

About half of the students made comments that could be categorized in this way.

* Particular courses and lecturers:

  Students did not feel there was enough lecturer accountability. They were critical of courses which:
  - were not challenging
  - were not well prepared
  - did not allow for enough input from students
  - lacked relevance and practical application for the classroom.

About half of the students made comments that could be categorized in this way.

* Use of time:

  About a third of the students commented on time they considered to be wasted.

- Assessment:
  Seven students made comments about the assessment methods used in the college, repeating criticisms referred to elsewhere in this report.

Wellington

The students' overall reaction to the college can be divided into three broad categories:

- General pleasure with the experience of being a student because:
  - the college is a supportive institution
  - the atmosphere is positive and relaxed
  - students' personal development is encouraged.

About a third of the students made comments which could be categorized in this way.

- Second year an improvement on the first year because:
  - the courses are more relevant
  - the courses are more challenging
  - higher standards are required
  - departments are taking student needs more seriously.

About a third of the students made comments which could be categorized in this way.

- General frustration because:
  - students are bored with the institution and courses
  - the content of courses is too easy
  - some lecturers are too lenient
  - some lecturers are disorganized.

About a quarter of the students made comments which could be categorized in this way.

☐ What the College Does Well

The student responses to this question fell roughly into three categories. In each case about a third of the students made a comment.

- The college as an institution:
  - a friendly, supportive environment
  - students are treated as equals
  - a tolerant, caring atmosphere where people are listened to.

- Individual courses and lecturers:
  - there is a very wide choice of courses
  - much depends on individual lecturers
  - the college is strong in the creative arts, including extracurricular activities.

- Equity issues:
  - the college handles these issues well
  - there is a 'positive push'.

Four of the 34 students were 'neutral' or undecided. (One student, when asked what the college does well, responded, 'Not a helluva lot!')

☐ What the College Does Poorly

Wellington students' comments about the things they think the college does poorly are particularly difficult to categorize because they were wide ranging. Two issues stand out and were each referred to by about a third of the students:

- Criticism of particular departments:
  - lecturers who were not 'accountable'
  - lecturers who wasted time
  - courses which did not allow for students' previous experience
  - courses which were repetitive and not integrated with others in the same department or with other departments
  - courses which were not relevant to the classroom
  - a lack of focus within the institution as a whole and in some departments and courses.

- Criticism of organization and administration:
  - routine things like enrolment not being handled well
  - the way courses are structured and timetabled
  - confusion within and between departments about organizational matters
  - the difficulty of trying to bring about change within the college.

- In a wide range of other matters, students referred to:
  - equity issues being 'pushed' too hard
  - problems with assessment
  - problems of co-ordination with the university
  - the inadequacy of the cafeteria.

Three of the 34 students said there was nothing the college did poorly.

Christchurch

When we talk about the experience of Christchurch students, it is even harder to generalize because there are three fairly discrete groups:

- those taking the shortened two-year course (graduates)
- the B.Ed. students
- the three-year undergraduates.

Student reactions overall tend to divide into one of two main categories:

1. Negative comments about administration and organization, including timetabling:
   - Lack of co-ordination between administration, staff, and students means students are confused and leads to wasted time, particularly at the beginning of the year.
   - Timetabling confusion, particularly with B.Ed. students.

- B.Ed. students not always sure what courses they are meant to be doing.
- Students not always given enough information to make informed decisions and so find out too late about changes which affect them.
- Complicated enrolment procedure in terms of course selection.
- Too many changes in course requirements.
- Although the college claims student interests are paramount, students believe administrative decisions are usually made without consultation and are in the interests of lecturers rather than students.
- The college lacks a strong corporate feeling. Departments do not always pull together, and individual lecturers run down other departments.

For this reason some students have trouble talking about 'the college'. What is the college? Many see it as a collection of departments. This feeling is exacerbated for B.Ed. students whose contact with the college is limited to a few departments in their second year.

2. A feeling that the college courses have improved in the second year and a general sense of pleasure:
   - The college course is better than last year.

   - Contributing factors are:
     - staff changes
     - course content
     - more choice of courses (graduates)
     - advantage of six-week blocks.

☐ What the College Does Well

The vast majority of comments students made about the things the college does well were either general comments about courses or comments about particular courses and lecturers.

- General comments related to:
  - students cannot talk about 'the college', but only individual departments or lecturers
  - variation between departments
  - a general improvement on last year
  - the wide variety of courses offered (graduates).

- The underlying feeling of most of the other comments is that the courses are more practically based than in the first year and therefore perceived by the students to be more relevant to their future role as teachers.

- General preparation for teaching:
  A few students made comments which we have classified as the college doing well in terms of a general preparation for teaching by, for example, providing practical courses and raising such issues as the effect of home background on children's school performance and helping students to think about such issues as multiculturalism and children with special needs.

☐ What the College Does Poorly

- In line with the over-riding impression of the college already discussed, students perceive organization and administration to be the areas where the college performs poorly. Inadequate communication and timetabling changes would come under this general organizational heading.

- Students commented on:
  - poor organization within the college
  - problems with timetabling, particularly short notice of timetable changes
  - inadequate communication between the administration, staff and students
  - confusion amongst students, particularly B.Ed. students, as to their course requirements
  - difficulty in coping with too many changes too

quickly

- problems for students in terms of long-term planning.

The College Courses

Background

Each of the colleges has an overall course structure for students training to be primary teachers. Pre-service college courses are offered to trainees as a collection of units, some of which are compulsory while others are optional. There is a core of compulsory subjects which is the same across all colleges, but the number and range of courses varies across colleges, as does the terminology used to describe them. All colleges are also in the process of reorganizing their courses so that the experience of second-year students is not necessarily that of students in subsequent years.

In *Auckland*, the students in their second year in 1990 had to take 30 components of college studies, 14 from six specified subjects and 16 from 12 selected studies. (A further four components are selected in the third year from a range of options.) The course was further broken up into 'minor' and 'major' subjects, the latter being those subjects which students intended to take over their three-year course.

In *Wellington* students have to complete a minimum of 50 units over three years. A minimum of 32 of these have to be completed by the end of the second year. The units are divided between vocational studies, which focus on the teaching of the school curriculum, and selected studies, which are specialist subject studies from which students make a choice. At a first glance the choice for Wellington students appears very wide and indeed the number of courses taken by the students we interviewed was large when compared with those taken by students in the other two colleges. However, as stated in the Wellington calendar, 'compulsory units, and unit type restrictions, define the boundaries of choice', and some students were frustrated that the degree of choice they had was less than at first appeared.

In *Christchurch*, second-year students in 1990 had to take a total of 36 professional education units made up of professional studies, teaching studies, educational media studies, and education studies, and 18 general education subject studies, which included two Maori studies units.

All the colleges are concerned with the personal development of students as well as their professional development as future classroom teachers. Our understanding of the course structure of the colleges is that compulsory subjects tend to relate to core curriculum areas and optional subjects tend to relate to students' personal interests and development, although students may also choose to do 'optional' subjects to strengthen their skills in specific curriculum areas.

We asked the students in our interview sample a number of questions about the college course and the units they were taking. One of the issues that interested us was whether students found the second-year course in a subject followed on from the first-year course in the same subject, and whether they found the second-year course more or less relevant to the classroom. We have already shared much of this material with college staff. As well as talking to staffs as a whole we have spoken with either the heads of departments as a group, or the staff of individual departments separately, in each of the colleges. Copies of the students' comments have been sent to each of the colleges. For this reason we are not including detailed student comment in this report.

When we reported last year, we summarized the reasons why students regarded some courses to be successful and others unsuccessful (*see Windows on Teacher Education, Phase I Initiation into Teacher Education,* p.105). What follows is a summary of student reaction to their units of study in their second year. There were differences of student opinion between colleges, and between courses within colleges, but there were also recurring themes within the student comments.

Students' Overall Comments About Courses

1. Much depends on the skills and personality of individual lecturers. Students appreciate lecturers who:
   * are enthusiastic about their subject
   * are well prepared
   * are good role models in their teaching methods
   * present their material in a lively manner
   * consult with students on the course outline and allow students some input and choice
   * are open to student comment and criticism
   * understand what is *now* happening in primary school classrooms
   * support students and increase their confidence both as individuals and as future classroom teachers
   * are equally concerned with all students, not just those who are good at a subject.

2. The course content and the way courses are organized are important. Students appreciate courses which:
   * have stated objectives and live up to them
   * are well planned and co-ordinated - courses with planned progressions that 'hang together'
   * are stimulating, with challenging content that extends students and helps them to 'kick about the thought processes'
   * provide time for discussion but do not use discussion as an excuse for not being well prepared
   * are relevant to the classroom while also recognizing the importance of students' personal development. This is helped if lecturers:
     - give concrete examples
     - provide opportunities for students to develop resources
     - assist students with lesson and unit plans
     - provide opportunities for practical experience with children

  - suggest ideas which can be tried out on teaching practice section
- focus on how children learn
- recognize students' previous experience and are at an appropriate level. (Examples were given by students who had taken Maori at university but had to cover basic Maori vocabulary at college; who had done 7th form mathematics but had to cover basic primary school numeracy skills; and who had a degree in music but had to cover basic notation.)
- are continuous from the previous year's courses but do not repeat work already covered
- provide a full workload of a high standard without 'busy work'
- cover relevant primary school curricula at all levels so that students are prepared equally well for all levels of the primary school. (There was a common criticism of students feeling more confident with junior and middle school than with intermediate level.)
- link curriculum content with how to teach it
- make the relationship to other curriculum areas clear. (Students in all colleges raised the question of the 'integrated curriculum'. The curriculum tends to be 'broken up' in the college. Who has the responsibility to put it together again?)
- demonstrate the relevance of educational theory to practical situations
- are the right length for the content. (There was a common feeling of 50-hour courses being too rushed and, in some cases, of information overload.)
- increase student confidence.

3. General

Other issues raised by students were:

- Is the assessment of the course appropriate - the quantity *versus* quality debate?

- Has the department 'got its act together'? Do the lecturers co-operate with each other without 'back-stabbing'?
- Does the department know where it fits in with other departments or does it think it is either the only, or the most important, department in the college?
- Is the relationship to university courses clear?
- Do the outside commitments of the lecturers interfere with their commitment to the college and the students?

The Balance of Compulsory and Optional Courses

Students were asked if they thought the balance of optional and compulsory courses seemed about right. Their responses are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1

The Balance of Optional and Compulsory Courses

Balance	Auckland	Wellington	Christchurch
Yes	34	9	21
No	3	18	10
Don't know	1	7	2
Total	38	34	33

The apparently marked differences by college in the students' responses to this question need to be treated with caution. Because the college programmes are organized differently, we believe that the amount of choice available to students differs. The Auckland students appear to be much more satisfied with the balance of compulsory and optional courses than the students at the other two colleges, but as one student commented:

> The balance is about right although everything is really compulsory anyway. You do two majors and

> then you get the choice of two more subjects to do during the year and the two you don't do this year you do next.

And a Christchurch student commented:

> All our subjects are compulsory - except subject studies. You can only choose *when* you do a subject. You still have to do it.

We will consider by college the comments students made to support their opinion.

Auckland

♦ Students who answered 'Yes'

The main reason given by students for saying that the balance of optional and compulsory courses was about right was that the compulsory courses were necessary because students 'needed the whole curriculum', or as one student put it:

> I think it's good because I know for a fact that if they were all optional I wouldn't be taking reading and you need it, so that's good.

♦ Other issues raised by students were:

- The college does the best it can within the constraints of the timetable - there are only so many hours in a day.
- Fifty hours is the minimum time needed to provide 'a base' for each curriculum area. Several students commented on how short a 50-hour course was.
- Several students who were taking mathematics in the second year thought that mathematics should be compulsory for more than one year.
- Several students were disappointed that they are going to have to drop one of their 'majors' in the third year.
- There were a few complaints about misunderstandings regarding English courses. Some students were disappointed that they could not take English in their second year without having done so in their first. One student said she had had to take an extra optional course in her second year because the English course she had

taken in her first year had not been considered part of the curriculum students had to cover over three years.

♦ Students who answered 'No' or 'Don't know'

- Students learn more in the optional courses because they take them over three years. Students are not able to go into sufficient depth in the brief, introductory compulsory courses.
- Mathematics should be compulsory throughout training.
- The difficulty of making a decision at the beginning of the first year about which courses students would like to carry right through their training.

Wellington

♦ Students who answered 'Yes'

Of the nine students who thought the balance between compulsory and optional courses was about right, two made no further comment; three said they were 'reasonably happy', or 'quite confident', or 'hadn't thought about it much'. One of the students said that she did not know if the balance was right or not but it suited her personally because the courses available to her had allowed her to 'tap into the areas' she was particularly interested in and she appreciated the range offered. The other two students commented on their own method of selecting their balance of compulsory and optional subjects, both choosing to do as many constrained courses as possible early on in the course to allow themselves time for more options later in the course.

♦ Students who answered 'No'

The most common reason for students thinking that the balance between compulsory and optional subjects was not satisfactory was that there were too many constrained (i.e. compulsory) courses. Because they took up so much time, students were not able to do as many options as they would like. This was particularly tantalizing when so many options were offered. The problem was compounded for university students, several of whom expressed disappointment that they were limited to 18 units.

There was also some criticism of the number of compulsory courses students were required to complete for their major subject. Once again the issue of students' previous experience not being recognized sufficiently was raised. Mature students particularly felt there should be more exemptions. Typical of the range of comments were:

> Well no. I think partly the reason for that is because I do varsity work, and I find that I don't have enough time. By the time I've done all my compulsory courses, I don't have enough time to do all the other things. I see it as the icing I suppose. I don't have time for the icing. There are these fantastic courses on making puppets or making musical instruments - I don't have time for that. And I don't have time for other things I want to do like mainstreaming, ESL and children with reading difficulties. There's three major courses and I'm going to have to pick one or maybe two of those that I'll have time to do, because they are whole morning courses. I just can't fit it in. As it is I run around in circles.
>
> No, the thing that gets me about them is that I have thought ever since I began here that if you are majoring in some subject there are some courses which should not be compulsory for that person to do. I feel they are a waste of time because in your major courses, if you are taking six units of something, you learn essentially what you are going to learn ... in compulsory. I also think that some departments in college have too many compulsory courses. The requirements of having to do 21 units for some subjects is in excess of what is necessary.
>
> Perhaps a few of those compulsory ones could have been optional, because I felt a few of the vocational, especially in professional studies 100 and 200, you should have had a choice, because a lot of people have done things like that before. Well if you've got children you don't need them anyway and if you're doing university studies you definitely don't need them.... I'm sure if they made them optional you would get very few people taking them.
>
> Not really - we haven't got much time at all to do optional ones. The constraints are all necessary but I don't think we should be restricted to 18 units, because I would have liked to do more this year. I'm here from 8:20 - 2:30, three days a week and 8:30 - 12 for the other two days. And I've got

> two weeks off from a block course because you're only allowed 18 units. I'd rather be here until 2:30 every day and do more optional units.

♦ Students who answered 'Don't know'

Students who answered 'don't know' usually acknowledged the need for constrained courses because of the importance of subject areas in the primary school curriculum, but also felt frustrated that the limit of 18 units did not allow them to take all the optional subjects they would like to take. A few students thought one answer might be to reduce the number of courses required for 'majors', particularly as students tended to major in subjects they were already good at. There is also repetition in some departments when students specializing in a curriculum area also have to take compulsory courses.

Christchurch

We have already commented that in Christchurch there are three discrete sets of students within our sample and the experiences they have differ (*see* p.18). If students are doing a B.Ed., for example, the number of optional courses (subject studies) they can take is reduced.

♦ The views of graduate students

Graduate students need to be considered separately from the others. In the first year they had to cover the curriculum areas and in the second year they had many more options. Most of them thought this balance was about right, although one student thought there should be more compulsory subjects because it was possible for students to leave the college without having addressed some of the basic subjects.

♦ Three-year students who answered 'Yes'

The common view of the students who believed the balance of courses was about right was that the compulsory subjects were to do with the primary school curriculum and they needed to be compulsory. As one student expressed it:

> Subject study is all we can choose. We need to do all those compulsory courses and there's not time for much else. It's good that we're forced to do

> everything else or you might think that language sounds awful, so I won't do that, but it is necessary.

Students also appreciated some choice which added variety to the course - 'You feel good about subjects you have chosen to do'. A number of students who said 'yes' added qualifying comments:

* At the moment 'Yes' because of the value of subject studies but students have heard that they are going to be abolished next year, a policy they do not agree with. Students need that degree of choice both to select subjects that particularly interest them and to be able to work on weaknesses.
* It seems about right but there are anomalies, for example, why is it that art and educational media are the only two subjects which are compulsory over two years?
* One option is probably sufficient (one student only).
* Yes, but unsure whether fulfilling requirements because not doing as much as others seem to be doing (one student only).
* Yes, but there needs to be more time spent on some subjects, for example, reading.

♦ Three-year students who answered 'No'

The most common reason for students answering 'no' was because they thought courses should be more flexible and students should have more choice.

♦ Other views

* Young students in particular need more choice to experience more options and broaden their outlook.
* More choice needed to enable students to follow up personal interests - the curriculum content of compulsory courses is limited and courses are 'ridiculously short'.
* Some of the compulsory courses should not be compulsory, largely because of content overlap with other courses, for example, reading and language.
* Options limited by timetabling constraints.

- Choice limited to two options - there should be greater opportunity to take options if students wish to specialize.
- There really are no 'options' - they are options in name only.

♦ Students who answered 'Don't know'

These students were both B.Ed. students who spent so little time at the college in their second year that they felt unable to comment.

Why Students Chose Particular Courses or Units of Study

We were interested to find out why students with a choice of subjects chose to take the courses they did, so we asked students to respond to a checklist of reasons which we had provided (*see* Appendix 3). Some interesting trends are apparent in the student responses:

- For all colleges, the main reason students selected optional courses was because they had a particular interest in the subject. However, this appears to be more the case in Wellington than in the other two colleges. One of the explanations for this may be that the choice of optional subjects is a more real choice for Wellington students. In the other two colleges it may be more a case of *when* they take a course than *if* they take it.
- Not surprisingly, as most students said they took a unit because they were particularly interested in the area, a relatively high proportion also said they did so for enjoyment.
- The second main reason given by students across all colleges was because they felt they needed help in the subject, although once again this was most likely to be the case in Wellington.
- Approximately 10% of the responses by college indicated that students were influenced in their choice of optional courses by later career possibilities. In all colleges the subjects most likely to be mentioned were:

mathematics, physical education, reading, and music. Of these, mathematics and reading tended to be mentioned because of their importance in the primary school curriculum. Music and physical education were also taken for this reason but some students who took these options also had future specialist positions in mind.

* Because of the importance students attach to the skills of individual lecturers, we had thought that in their second year students might have been more influenced in their choice of courses by the personality of individual lecturers than they appear to have been. This may link to the point we have already made that even within the so-called choices there are certain constraints for students. Where students were influenced by the personality of a lecturer, student responses spread across a range of courses. For example, of the 13 students in Auckland who said they chose a course because of a lecturer, four referred to music; two each to science, English, and art; and one to each of Maori, advanced reading, and drama.
* A relatively small proportion of students acted on the advice of others in selecting their optional units. The advice was usually given by their peers or students with an earlier experience of the college, including family. Lecturers and tutors were mentioned by a few students.
* It had been suggested to us in the preliminary stage of the study that student choice might be limited by factors such as clashes with university courses; limits to student numbers able to take courses; timetabling difficulties; and finances. We found that this does not appear to be the case.

The Most Useful Courses

We asked students the question:

> *Of all the courses you have taken so far, both compulsory and optional, which three would you rank as the most useful in terms of your future experience as a classroom teacher?*

The students' responses are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2

Most Useful Courses

College	Courses	No. of students
Auckland (No.=38)	Reading	26
	Mathematics	21
	Physical education	16
	Science	10
	Social studies	8
Wellington (No.=34)	Reading	21
	Mathematics	15
	Physical education	14
	Social studies	13
	Science	11
Christchurch (No.=33)	Reading	18
	Mathematics	16
	Physical education	11
	Education	9
	Social studies	8

It will be seen from Table 2 that students across all colleges were remarkably consistent in their choice of courses with reading, mathematics, and physical education being considered the most useful courses in each of the three colleges. Courses in science and social studies were the next most important in Auckland and Wellington. In Christchurch education was included in the top five courses along with social studies, but not science. It is interesting to note that when we asked students prior to training which subjects they were most looking forward to teaching, reading and physical education were high on the list. Mathematics, on the other hand, was a subject many students were not looking forward to teaching.

A factor raised with us by lecturers in report-back sessions was that there are some subjects students see taught in classrooms on a daily basis, for example reading and mathematics, and others which may be neglected in the classroom, for example, science, music, or Maori.

One would expect the subjects which have compulsory or constrained courses in all colleges to be referred to by most students simply because all students take them. Optional courses, particularly in Wellington, were often taken by only a few students so that even if they mentioned them as being among the three most useful courses they had taken, the total number of students referring to a particular course would be low.

As always there are problems in making comparisons across colleges on the basis of students' responses to this question. For one thing, the colleges use different labels to describe courses; for example, Wellington does not have a course labelled 'education'. The topics covered in education courses in Auckland and Christchurch tend in Wellington to be included in various professional studies courses.

Some students had trouble answering the question for a number of reasons:

- Difficulty in selecting only three courses when they would like to mention more.
- In some subjects, courses were particularly helpful in one year but not in the other.
- Students were more likely to focus on courses which they had taken in their second year. There may have been other courses which they had taken in their first year which they found particularly helpful.
- Because there is a wide range of courses within departments, students often singled out one course within a curriculum area, particularly in Wellington. (The problem was compounded in Wellington because sometimes

the same course has more than one label.) In other instances students said all courses within a department were well taught.

The question we asked limited students' choices to courses they thought would be useful to them as future classroom teachers. There may well have been other courses students would have liked to refer to in terms of personal benefit to themselves. One student commented:

> Even though I rank them as most useful, it doesn't mean that I think that they are the most beneficial to me at the moment. I have listed Maori, maths, education and reading. I think they should be the most important but they are not living up to expectations. That's a really hard question to answer because it's almost like I feel that these subjects have to be beneficial to me, otherwise it's a waste of bloody time taking them. Music may be quite beneficial to the kids. (Auckland)

Some students had difficulty distinguishing between those courses they thought they should list because the subject was important in the classroom, and those they would prefer to mention because the course was well taught at the college, for example:

> My personal love is art, but I'm wondering whether maths or phys. ed. should be next. Maths wasn't that well taught, that was the problem. Well, it depends on what your criteria is, doesn't it? Maths should have been the thing that really translated well into the classroom, but it didn't. Probably phys. ed. would translate better into the classroom and that's because it's well taught. It's given us the skills. We've got a good role model and we've got the "whys" and "where-fores". (Auckland)

Students did not necesssarily give a reason to support their choice of course. When they did make comments it was not always possible to quantify the reasons by subject.

There were differences in the students' explanations by college as to why they thought particular courses were the most useful in terms of their future as classroom teachers, but several key issues emerged. These were:

- The importance of the way the subject was taught. Students commented favourably on courses where there was a clear link between theory and practice, and where the course was taught in a practical manner with plenty of opportunity to develop resources for the classroom.
- The importance of the subject for the primary school curriculum in the classroom. This was particularly so for reading and mathematics.
- The personality and lecturing style of the lecturer.
- The fact that a subject was a student's particular interest. Physical education was a common example.
- The fact that the experiences students had had in college and on teaching practice had increased their confidence in the subject.
- The course helped with overall classroom planning and management, for example, professional studies courses in Wellington.
- Courses which increase students' understanding of children, for example, education courses in Christchurch.
- Students often linked subjects with children's enjoyment or particular functions they believed a subject performed, for example:
  - art allows children to express themselves creatively and to relax
  - drama is a good vehicle for children's learning
  - health contributes to children's self-esteem
  - 'music puts a song in everyone's heart'
  - music and drama are good for non-verbal communication
  - physical education provides physical activity after more sedentary occupations
  - learning a language, for example Maori, helps children to understand each other more.
- Some subjects, as well as having merit in themselves, are particularly useful for an integrated curriculum, for example - language courses, as well as helping

students to develop ways of enabling children to express themselves, can also provide ideas which can be used for whatever curriculum area children are working in.

* A subject may be seen as particularly important because it is one that boards of trustees will be looking for when they are making school appointments, for example, a student who has specialized in mathematics or music.
* Students may appreciate the way a subject has been taught because the methods used are so different from when they were at school, for example, mathematics and science, particularly the movement from textbook to discovery learning.
* A subject may be a student strength but students value the college experience because it has helped them to understand how they might teach the subject in the classroom.
* Some subjects are particularly helpful for getting to know children, for example, social studies.

Co-ordination Between Teaching Experience and the College Programme[1]

Students were asked if they thought their teaching experience or teaching practice sections were co-ordinated with the rest of the college programme. Table 3 summarizes the student responses.

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[1] Students at each college have classroom experience in schools as part of their college course. This may be in the form of one-off lessons, occasional or regular visits linked to a particular college course, or for longer periods, usually of four to six weeks, when students are attached to an associate teacher in a classroom. These longer periods are referred to as teaching experience in Auckland and Wellington and teaching practice in Christchurch. Students themselves often refer to their time in schools as being 'on section'.

Table 3

Co-ordination of Teaching Experience With College Programme

	Auckland		Wellington		Christchurch	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	21	*55*	10	*29*	20	*61*
No	10	*26*	14	*41*	8	*24*
Don't know	7	*18*	10	*29*	5	*15*
Total	38		34		33	

It will be seen from Table 3 that there were clear differences by college in the students' responses to this question. In Christchurch 61%, or nearly two-thirds of the students, thought their teaching practice sections were well co-ordinated with the rest of the college programme; compared with just over half, or 55% of the students, in Auckland; and fewer than a third, or 29%, in Wellington. There were similarities in the students' comments in support of their views; but, as the way the colleges organize their teaching experiences differ, it is probably more appropriate to look at this issue college by college.

Auckland

Most students added a comment but the comments did not always support their judgement about why they did or did not think the teaching experience was well co-ordinated with the rest of the college programme, and the issues raised by students were similar regardless of their view. Students who felt the teaching experience was well co-ordinated with the rest of the college programme were the least likely to add explanatory comments and those who did tended to make statements which qualified their position. The most positive statements were that:

- Teaching experience occurs at appropriate times in the college programme.

- In the second year a good time is straight after the May holidays:

> You can go out and do your best. And you come back into college and you have to report back on each subject on what you took and how you felt it went. So I guess they are.

Issues Whether 'Yes', 'No', or 'Don't Know'

* The most common concern was the difficulty for students of carrying out their 'brief' from college when it did not fit into the class programme:

> Sometimes "Yes", sometimes "No". We are supposed to do certain things but at that time of the year schools aren't doing that, e.g., first years in the teaching section before the beginning of the May holidays were expected to look at the beginning of units but classes were all finishing units. In my section this time I was supposed to take a science unit which the class had finished in the first term. They were concentrating on a language unit so I missed out again. It happens a lot. We are expected to do certain things which the schools aren't doing.

* Students needed a certain amount of freedom if what they were expected to do for the college did not fit the class programme:

> You are a visitor into the classroom and often can do quite a lot to upset the programme because of your needs to meet the needs of the college.
>
> You are often expected to teach a major subject in a teaching section - subjects you are taking as options. But whenever you walk into anyone else's classroom you have to teach what they are teaching. It's not your class so you are more co-ordinated with the school than the college.

* Conversely, the classroom teacher may expect students to take lessons on topics not yet covered at college:

> I went out this time and had to do a unit on astronomy. We haven't done anything of that. We've done parts of skeletons and animals but that didn't help at all.

- Variation in the way departments handle teaching experience requirements.
- Problems of having teaching experience at one level of the system, particularly intermediate, when the curriculum for that level has not been covered:

> I did a section at the intermediate and one of the reasons that it took me a week to actually feel quite comfortable at the school was the fact that I had done so very little across all curriculum areas at intermediate level - plenty on junior and standards. Courses tend to progress through from junior school.

- For some students lack of co-ordination is reflected in the fact that lecturers set assignments, other than those related to teaching experience, which students are expected to complete during the time they are in schools:

> The two don't mix. Just before you go out on section you have all this work piled on top of you, assignments for each subject. They're dumped on you around the time of section. It's like section is put there and then a bit of work around it. They give you the assignments now because they can't give them to you over the next 4 weeks when you're on section.

- A few students expressed the view that what is learnt in college is not relevant to the school system, a view supported by some associates who tell students what they are learning in college is a waste of time and will not fit them for the real world of the classroom.
- For a few students there are aspects of the teaching brief that are irrelevant, for example, copying down a plan of the classroom.
- Balance of time spent fulfilling college requirements and getting the best out of a particular class:

> Sometimes feel that you are spending so much time on your section file that you are not getting the best out of the class, establishing rapport with children.

- Follow-up after teaching experience does not always happen and not always useful:

> It's hard for the college to do it effectively. We all hate rehashing our teaching sections. I'd like more time to share each other's resources from the classroom. I'd love to have a day at the photocopier with other people's resources.

* In the study as a whole we have had remarkably little criticism of associate teachers but a few students took this opportunity to raise the question of the problems faced by students when associate teachers did not teach according to methods advocated by the college.

A number of students, rather than commenting on the co-ordination of teaching experience with the rest of the college programme, reiterated their views of the value of teaching experience, 'the highlight of the year', and expressed a common view that students should have more periods of teaching experience of longer duration.

Range of Quotes

> We build up before we go. We know what's required - we've got ideas and resources. We come back, discuss, evaluate - positive things that happened.

> In a way they are good - you get to test out some of the things you've done at college. You're given a section brief of what you have to do and that goes back to college and then you come back and work on that.

> In a way. I think they lump the sections at the end of the block and say, "There, go to it and try out your ideas." I suppose it's only practical for them, managing their time - they've got to get so many people out. I don't think you ever feel ready when you go into the classroom.

> Not really. What they want us to do here in college and what we actually end up doing in schools is quite different. You have to fit into the teaching programme out there. I don't know that the college should give us so many set tasks to do - ask us to fit in as many as we can but I tend to find I am doing completely different things. I was doing social studies in class and I haven't even done social studies at college. It's hard for the

> college. We're going into teaching programmes they've had running all year. They can't co-ordinate. Every school is doing different things. They're probably doing the best they can.
>
> A bit stop start. You come back and feel as if you've come from another world. You feel very much dislocated when you come back.

Wellington

Of the three colleges, Wellington was the one where students were least likely to think teaching experience is co-ordinated with the rest of the college programme. The way teaching experience is organized has since changed in Wellington. When we reported back to the college, the lecturer with overall responsibility for teaching experience was not surprised by the student reaction. Issues raised by students in the other two colleges apply in Wellington, but two factors which may make for added problems of co-ordination in Wellington are the fact that Wellington offers students a wider range of courses than the other colleges and students have a measure of choice as to when they fulfil their teaching experience requirements.

Students do acknowledge that there are problems for the college. These include:

- Not enough associates for the number of students needing placements.
- Difficulty of ensuring that students have covered particular curriculum areas before they may be expected to teach a topic because of the focus of a particular classroom.

Student Reactions

- A feeling that teaching sections are 'ad hoc'; disjointed; just 'pop up'.
- If students have not covered a curriculum area they do not have appropriate resources.
- The college has tightened up on its requirements for teaching experience. Students who do not fulfil the requirements for teaching experience do not pass.
- However, not all lecturers tell students what they expect

from teaching experience. There is a lack of co-ordination between what students were told to do on 'the little green sheet' [teaching experience brief], and what individual lecturers told students.

- Wide variation amongst departments as to the relevance of what they are doing for the classroom and therefore usefulness for teaching experience.
- Students cannot always choose to do teaching experience at the best time because of timetabling constraints.
- The new six-week blocks may make teaching experience less disjointed.
- The value of teaching experience is largely dependent on the particular associate.
- Last year's four-week block had too many assignments to be crammed in.
- There are particular problems for university students.
- Follow-up of student folders after teaching experience is not consistent.
- Professional studies 300 was particularly well co-ordinated with major teaching experience blocks. (Graduate)

Range of Quotes

> I think they're getting more co-ordinated. Last year was a real mess - all the different departments would tell you what they wanted you to do and then the green sheets told you completely different things. That was a bit of a disaster, but now it is much better. The departments aren't telling you what to do any more. I don't think they need to. They say we've got to teach five curriculum areas for three consecutive lessons and you can choose which ones you want. You can fit it into the class programme. That's much better because the things they were asking us to do last year just didn't fit in with what was happening in the class.

> Not really. Sections just seem to arrive. Some of the lecturers say, "You can come and talk to me if you need any help". Because people are going out at different times they can't structure it to say we're

going to do this in teaching practice. I might be going out in this block and someone else might not be.

No. You get a handful of green sheets and go to it. To be perfectly honest, I've done the teaching practices exactly how I thought they were meant to be run, not according to the green sheet. We can't dish up a green sheet. We've got to be confident and aware of what we're going to teach. I usually go through the curriculum and try and include the courses that I've been studying and work out a unit from there.

That's a really tricky one because TP depends so much on the associate you are given. It's very chancy. I've had some excellent practices but I had one where I came out and thought, "What a way to teach, what a horrible atmosphere!" But even that, when I got a bit of perspective on it, when I got away from it, I thought that learning how you don't want to teach is probably even more valuable than seeing what you like, because it helps you to sort out your ideas.

Co-ordinated. I don't know. They seem to pop up in the middle of courses. But professional studies 300 was the course that really did lead up to the major practices and that was really useful. That was one course that tied in well. It was really well co-ordinated, but usually they just tend to pop up in the middle of courses and the courses have little or no bearing.

Everybody usually looks forward to going out on section, but when the visiting lecturer comes in you see it as an interruption to your programme. So you whip up something really exciting, so that it's all on the surface. And your folder that you put all your work in, nobody has been particularly keen to look at mine. I've handed it around and they've said, "Oh, give it to so and so, give it to so and so". So I didn't bother and nobody followed me up for it. I might as well have not done the work at all really.

Christchurch

Students who thought teaching practice was co-ordinated with the rest of the college programme usually did so because:

- The assignments set for teaching practice followed block courses. Students saw a good relationship between block courses and teaching practice.

- Teaching practice provided a good opportunity to put into practice various topics they had dealt with in college, for example, lesson plans.
- College courses seemed more practical this year so that students found it easier to see applications to the classroom when they were on teaching practice sections.
- The six-week blocks in the second year were better co-ordinated than the first-year students' teaching practice experience.

Some students' comments referred to the usefulness of teaching practice rather than the actual co-ordination with the college programme. Various issues were raised by students which they think need to be considered more fully:

- B.Ed. students have a particular problem with teaching practice because they have spent so much less time in the college.
- Feedback after teaching practice is not done consistently nor is it as consistently helpful as it might be.
- Although what the college wants students to do may be related to internal courses, assignments are not co-ordinated with individual classroom programmes. (However, students do acknowledge that where they have not found it possible to carry out college assignments, lecturers have been understanding.)
- Although most students are pleased with the link between the subjects they have studied in their block courses and the teaching practice assignments, a few students feel this linkage narrows the broad focus they believe should be the objective of teaching practice experience.

Range of Quotes

> To a certain degree. I'm supposed to go on section at the end of the year. Because I have been on the B.Ed. programme I don't feel I will have the knowledge to go out on section at the end of the year. I won't have anything that I've done during the year that would be of value on section. It's supposed to be a self-building thing but I'm afraid

I'll get lost. I'd prefer to have something to do.

... We've always had work that we've done in the block before. Both sections I've had haven't really been discussed fully with the tutor and I haven't really got anything out of it after I've done the section. I got all the feedback from the teachers at the school, not from here which really annoyed me. Both times I've taken my folder along to my lecturer and they've just said, "We've heard about it, don't bother to show it to us". I feel like saying, "Just have a look at it so you can get an idea of where I am at". Otherwise they don't have any idea.

A lot of the time they give you little tasks to do on section. Some of them annoy you and you don't do them because they don't fit in with your classroom routine. This year they've come up with a better system, and they've said, "Well if you can't teach that don't worry", which has really helped because a lot of the time you can't put in a different unit to what the class is doing.... But some fit in really well, especially this time when we had to do a unit plan so we used it in maths and then we used it on another topic and it just followed through nicely with what we were learning at college. You can come back to college and discuss it and say, "This worked really well, and this didn't". It was really good.

We are given assignments to do on section that are relevant to what we are doing at the time. You learn a hell of a lot on section, but at the end, you just close your folder. It's the end of that section and you are on to something else. Even more discussion when you get back would help - talking to the other students to find out what they think.

It is this year because of the curriculum courses I've had. I had two blocks and then the section. Now I've got another two blocks and I'm doing completely different things. I can trial these things while they are still fresh because I just finished the course and then I go on section. You use the course and don't forget it.

This year - not so much last year. This year we've been able to take what we've done on to section and then get feedback from it too - more practical courses this year. I've got a lot more out of sections this year due to the fact I've got a lot more out of college.

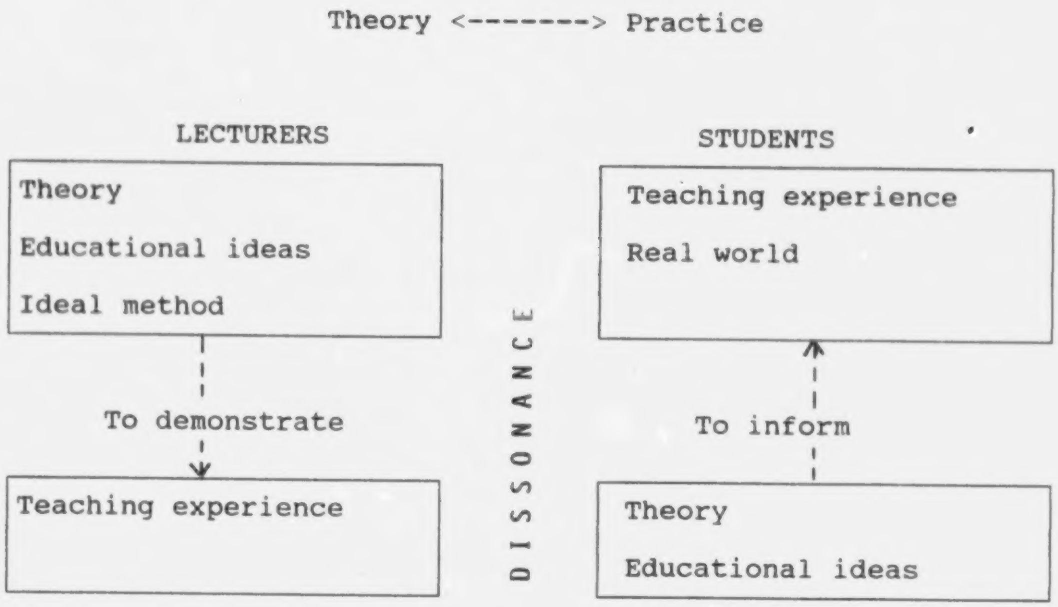
General

Teaching experience in the classroom is not a particular focus of this study, which has been more concerned with the students' experiences in college. In planning the study the researchers felt that the experiences students had on teaching practice, although interesting in themselves, would have broadened an already wide-ranging study too much. Furthermore, two recent studies by Ramsay (1988) and Hawe (1987) had already concentrated on this aspect of teacher training. However, had we realized when the study was planned the importance students attach to teaching experience we might have considered this aspect of their training more fully.

We only asked one question which related directly to teaching experience but we were surprised at how frequently teaching experience came up in student responses to other questions, for example, in their overall reaction to the institution, as a reason for their increased motivation to teach, and the classroom as the place where their views had changed about how children learn. The relationship between the college course and experience in classrooms is obviously a crucial one, and problems in co-ordinating the two underline for students the gap between theory and practice, a problem of which they are constantly aware. Furthermore, there appears to be dissonance between the view of most staff and that of most students as to where the main focus of their training should lie. Diagram 1 is an attempt to summarize this apparent tension.

Diagram 1

Tension Between Theory and Practice


Theory <-------> Practice
LECTURERS
Theory
Educational ideas
Ideal method
To demonstrate
Teaching experience
DISSONANCE
STUDENTS
Teaching experience
Real world
To inform
Theory
Educational ideas

Teaching experience "interrupts" lecture programme

Lecture programme "interrupts" teaching experience

Lecturers and students both recognize the importance of both the lecture room and the classroom. The importance of the relationship between the two is demonstrted by those college courses which run concurrently with classroom practice. But it may also be true to say that the college is central to the training experience for lecturers, whereas the school is the major focus for the students. Lecturers believe that their courses prepare students to teach. The ideas and methods advocated by lecturers are presented to the students in college and can then be practised by them in schools. The students, on the other hand, see the major focus of their training to be in the classroom and view the college as a place which should be helping them to cope more effectively in schools. As one student put it:

> Teaching practice sections are not well co-ordinated with the college course. Lecturers tend to blame the teaching sections for getting in the way of their courses. They tend to say, "Well, we've only got six weeks to do this, so what we'll do is we'll give you this assignment to do on your section". Not, "You can use this section to test this. This is what we have taught you, so why not do this assignment". Sections are treated as a kind of "tack-on" to the course, when they could be regarded as a very positive thing. (Christchurch)

STUDENT PROFILE 1

When we spoke to Mary six months into her college course she said that she was enjoying college, although the highlight of her experience was the teaching practice section. Six months into her second year Mary said that in fact she had not enjoyed her first year at all. However, this year there was a better atmosphere and better lecturers. Mary appreciates the fact that if students do have a problem there is always someone they can go and talk to who is prepared to listen. She thinks the best thing about the college is the interaction between staff and students. She finds most lecturers very approachable and is quite comfortable expressing her own views and opinions. She thinks the college is poor at communicating about small things, such as students having to pay for materials in some classes.

Mary thinks the balance of the optional and compulsory courses at the college is about right. Choice of courses is limited because of the number of compulsory courses students have to take but she thinks that this is a good thing because they are all necessary. Mary made positive comments about most of the courses she is doing this year, most of which she thought were an improvement on last year because they were more practical and students were building up resources. She singled out Maori, reading, art, mathematics and music in this regard. Because we interviewed Mary half way through the year, there were some courses which she was only just beginning, for example social studies and physical education, so she was not in a position to comment about them. Mary is doing education at university and although she gets some exemption at college because of that, she does feel what she is doing at college at the moment is very similar to a major assignment she has just done at university. As a subject study, that is, an optional course, Mary is doing an English course on research on children's literature. She has found this hard work but the process of learning how to use the library for research purposes has been helpful. Mary enjoyed the subject studies mathematics course she did last year (compared with curriculum studies which was 'total boredom'), but she is disappointed so far with this year's subject studies mathematics course because of the focus on model-making when she would rather do other things. Mary particularly enjoys professional studies meetings, partly because of the chance to 'get to know everybody', but also because students, in feedback sessions about their section experiences, exchange resources and pick up ideas about planning. Of all the courses Mary has done so far at college the three which she thinks will be most useful for her as a classroom teacher are reading, art, and mathematics. Mathematics is an interest area for Mary but she also believes it is a very important subject in the classroom. The reading course relates theory to practice well, and Mary has been able to use ideas from the course on section. The art course is excellent in suggesting ideas for the classroom.

Mary feels that her confidence has increased most in mathematics and reading. Her greatest curriculum weakness is probably music although she has improved considerably since last year - there are just certain aspects she would not be confident to teach. She was aware when she was on section she lacked confidence in a few things but more experience over the next 12 months should change this.

Mary agrees with most of the assessments she has been given for her course work but she is disappointed that there does not appear to be a uniform system within the college of assessing students' work. She thinks that in terms of her ability to get a job when she leaves college, particularly in competition with students from other colleges, it would be better for assignments to be graded rather than marked on a pass/fail system. She does not think she has become any more skilled at assessing her own performance and commented that she has had little opportunity to do so although she expects to have to in the social studies course she is just starting. Students are meant to assess themselves on section but she finds it hard to step back and appraise herself; she does not think the section form helps or that she has the skills to know what to write. Mary feels that she has not yet had much information about how to assess children in the classroom. What she has had has mostly been while on section observing associates with, for example, checkpoint mathematics and reading running records.

When we asked Mary if she thought there was a college view on what makes a good teacher, she had difficulty in answering the question because she thinks there are so many different views held by lecturers. She thinks the main thing is to be an open-minded, well-rounded person. For similar reasons, Mary does not know if lecturers present a coherent or co-ordinated view of how children learn. Mary's own views of how children learn have changed since the beginning of the course. She thinks it is difficult at the beginning of the course to understand deeply how children learn, especially how they learn to read. She feels her ideas have matured and expanded. One thing she is sure about is that every child learns in a different way. The experience Mary has had on section has helped her to increase her understanding of how children learn and Mary regards her associate teachers as being the biggest influence on her own teaching style. She has also been influenced by other people in the community working with children. Some lecturers are also helpful. Because Mary believes that the best way for students to develop their own teaching methods is by observing other people's, she does not feel most lecturers are good role models. She herself prefers child-centred to teacher-directed teaching styles and she feels that many lecturers are teacher directed and find it easier to give out notes. This is not true for subjects like physical education which get the students involved.

As already mentioned, Mary is attending university but she does not enjoy the institution. She finds it too big and says students do not get any help from lecturers because there is so little interaction between lecturers and students - 'they just talk and leave'. Even the tutors are 'distant'.

Mary has picked up a science course in place of sociology of education which she dropped because she disliked the emphasis on Marxism which she felt had little relevance to teaching. Educational psychology II, on the other hand, has been very useful. The course includes the study of behaviour and also focuses on test construction. Mary feels both of these topics will contribute towards her effectiveness as a primary school teacher.

We asked Mary how she thought the college handled issues such as sexism, racism, socio-economic status, and biculturalism, and whether or not her own views had changed on any of these issues. Mary does not think they have. She does not think sexism is an issue at college. The question of the imbalance between numbers of female and male students is just accepted and not made into a problem. As far as the classroom is concerned, Mary has not thought much about it. She thinks perhaps students should be made more aware of the possibility of sexism in schools and that a short course would be helpful. Mary is pleased that there is a good mix of Maori and Pacific Island students at the college, brought about because of the selection process. There was an issue related to Maori students discussed at the last student forum but Mary could not remember what it was. In her interview for selection, Mary asked a question about a multiculturalism course but when she got to college she found the focus of the course was not multiculturalism but Maori. However, she feels students do need Maori courses, so accepts this. As for socio-economic status, the main issue there is students' ability to pay fees and the fact that those with less money either cannot afford to come or, in some cases, are now having to leave. Student fees are a major problem as far as Mary is concerned. She does not think socio-economic status is an issue that lecturers talk about in relation to the classroom.

Mary did not have much comment about changes in the school system except that they have 'good and bad' in them. Most of what she knows she heard while on section, where teachers are worrying about what they can and cannot do. The changes have not been in place long enough for them to have been given a chance.

Mary is more motivated to be a primary teacher than when she began the course. As she says, 'The further you get into it the more confident you feel'. In fact if the course finished tomorrow she feels she could cope - how well she would do is another matter. She feels she needs more information about specific things, particularly what is appropriate for different ages and stages in the various subjects. It would be helpful if students knew which area of the school they were going to teach in so that they could concentrate on that level.

The one change she would really like to see in the college would be more mixing between the different areas. Mary is training to be a primary school teacher and she would like the opportunity to mix with those training to teach in secondary schools or in early childhood centres.

STUDENT PROFILE 2

Betty is doing a two-year course so when we interviewed her she only had six months of her training to go. She found it hard to give an overall impression of the college of education. She thinks it's a good meeting place to share ideas, but personally she feels it leaves a lot to be desired. She regards the college as a supportive learning environment and thinks lecturers try to tackle some of the equity issues. On the other hand, there is nothing like enough student input as to what they feel they need. Some of the lecturers have been at the college too long and are out of touch with the schools. There are too many layers of administration so that it is hard for students to 'get to the top' and get things changed.

Of the courses Betty is taking, she is particularly critical of education. She is doing a course on special education which she regards as 'totally useless' compared with a similar course she did at university. At the college, students had to go into a school and work with one child, so they had a chance to look at only one disability. At university, by comparison, the students went on field visits, visited about 15 different places, and talked to children and teachers about a range of problems. At the college students shared their various experiences but this was not as satisfactory as first-hand experience. The students at the college had the feeling that they did all the ground work, while the lecturers running the course did not know all that much about it. Reading, by comparison, is one of the best courses Betty has done, especially this year when the lecturers have helped students with issues they will have to face next year. They have given the students 'mock-up classrooms' where students have had to sort out the problems that they may have as year-one teachers - they have a good idea not only about possible problems but also about the content of the reading programme. Of the optional courses Betty has done, she has found the mathematics course really good and more helpful than the first-year course which was ground work. She thinks all graduate students should have to do the second-year course because they did not get enough last year. Betty was hesitant about the drama course she took to start with but as the year has gone on she has realized they have learnt a lot and she now thinks it one of the most useful courses she has taken, largely because she now believes drama provides so many learning experiences for children. Reading and mathematics would be the other two most useful courses.

Betty does not think the college focuses particularly well on the individual development of students. She does not think there is much point in individual students going to a lecturer with a complaint because they would not be listened to, which is why the graduate students tend to have gone as a group to raise problems - 'there's a better chance of them listening'.

Betty says the system of assessment has changed this year to include merit passes and distinction. For merit passes most departments require essays, which Betty thinks is ridiculous. She thinks most graduate students have had essays 'coming out their ears' and this is not a fair way to assess them. Assessment should depend on their effectiveness in the classroom, but in some subjects they are not seen in the classroom. She says assessing children's work has been discussed in mathematics and reading but she is concerned that students have not been given any real guidance as to how to mark children's process writing.

Betty is also doing two papers at university and is finding the combined workload demanding. She thinks the two courses she is taking, which include special education, the seriously ill child (which is medically based), and early determinants of behaviour and modification, are both excellent and will be of practical use to her as a teacher. The lecturer of the first course has been a teacher as well as a lecturer and 'really knows his stuff'.

When we asked Betty about the length of the course, she replied that the content of the college course could easily be covered in one year - there are so many gaps in her timetable. She would prefer to do university papers while she is teaching, as she finds commuting between the two institutions really difficult, particularly with the parking problems at university. She would rather the college course was condensed to one year and the education section omitted. Now that she is three-quarters of the way through the course, she is really excited at the thought of her own classroom. She thinks that the most useful parts of the course have been the support of her friends, who share resources and give each other professional support, and the reading course. Life has been made easier by those lecturers who are approachable.

Betty thinks the college as an institution is doing as much as it can about sexism but unfortunately it is still there. She supposes it depends on what your definition of sexism is. One of her male colleagues 'pushed a few buttons in the hierarchy' and was allowed to finish the course six months early, which she thinks would have been more difficult for a woman student. She thinks for a big institution the college tries to address racism but it does not really succeed. For example, she thinks the college separates students into three groups - Pakeha, Maori, and Pacific Islanders. These are very broad groupings and do not take into account, for example, tribal affiliations. Her own views have changed on racism as an issue, as a consequence of the 50-hour multicultural course students were required to take. The course was quite enjoyable, although it was not what the students wanted. The lecturer said he could not give anyone in the (largely white) class a merit pass because he could not be sure of their Maori spirituality, which they would not be able to understand as they were not Maori. A lot of people had put a lot of work into that course and it made them feel quite bitter. Betty said she started with an open mind and was really positive about the race issue, because her father belongs to a minority group. The experience made her angry and she thought it was unfair. She does not think the college addresses the issue of socio-economic status because of inequities caused by bursaries and those who are or are not entitled to 'discounts'. She is cross because she has to work so hard to stay at college and other students have been able to use their low SES to secure assistance.

Betty says her confidence has increased most in lesson planning and the way to group students. She still thinks spelling is a weakness and she is not confident about evaluating children. She is not aware of a college view of what makes a good teacher. She thinks many lecturers think a caring attitude is important, someone who listens as well as speaks, and teachers need to have good control of a class - without control there is no teaching. She thinks lecturers' views on how children learn are based on their own personal philosophy and that is a good thing. For herself, she has become much more aware of children's individual needs and is particularly interested in children with special needs and in how they should be integrated and mainstreamed. She thinks the philosophy of the school and the personality of the children she has worked with have been the main influences on her teaching style. The negative experience her class of students had with a first-year teacher who spoke of his problems in the classroom has probably decreased Betty's motivation to teach. She feels that it might have been all right if it had happened earlier in the course, but it is too late to do much now. She says she still needs a lot of help with how to communicate with other staff and the principal.

Betty still thinks the lecturers have hardly talked about changes going on in the school system because so much is still changing and no one really knows what is going on.

Betty is moving through her two-year graduate course with distinct reservations. She regards the college as a system within which it is very difficult to effect change. She continues to be enthusiastic about her university studies which she regards as superior to those at college.

STUDENTS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Student Skills Which Still Need To Be Developed: Areas Where Student Confidence Has Most Increased

We asked the students if, as future classroom teachers, they had any particular weaknesses or skills that still needed developing, and in what areas their confidence had most increased. In each of the colleges most students felt they had skills that still needed to be developed. Other students - 10 in Auckland, seven in Wellington, four in Christchurch - felt quite confident and, as one student put it, 'had no great fears'. Several of these students added a comment to the effect that although they had no particular weaknesses they realized that there was always more to learn. It was common for students when they did specify current weaknesses to add that although they were not completely confident they were considerably more confident than in their first year at college. Others noted courses they had elected to take to help them with a perceived weakness.

The students' comments, regardless of college, tended to refer either to weaknesses they had in specified curriculum areas, or to concerns they had about various aspects of classroom practice. A few students also referred to personal qualities, usually confidence in speaking in front of others. Similarly when students mentioned areas of increased confidence, they also referred to specified curriculum areas, aspects of classroom practice or personal skills.

Diagrammatically the students' responses to both questions can be summarized as in Diagram 2.

Diagram 2

Students' Perceived Weaknesses and Areas of Increased Confidence

WEAKNESSES	**INCREASED CONFIDENCE**
CURRICULUM AREAS Mathematics Music (most common) Science	CURRICULUM AREAS Mathematics (most common)
CLASSROOM PRACTICE Classroom management and control Long-term planning	CLASSROOM PRACTICE Classroom management and control Lesson plans
PERSONAL SKILLS Speaking in front of others	PERSONAL SKILLS General maturity Speaking in front of others

Several patterns emerged in the students' comments:

* In all colleges students are more likely to perceive that they have weaknesses in particular curriculum areas than

in aspects of classroom practice.

- The differences are less marked in Auckland than in Wellington or Christchurch. (We have no way of knowing why this is so. One explanation may be that as the ways the colleges organize their programmes differ, Auckland students may cover more curriculum content earlier in their training.)
- In all colleges the number of students who think they have a specific weakness in either a curriculum area or an aspect of classroom practice is less than the percentage who believe their confidence has increased. These two groups of students are not discrete. It was common for students who said they had a particular weakness also to say their confidence had increased.
- The difference between the proportion of students who say they have a weakness and the proportion who say their confidence has increased is more marked for aspects of classroom practice than for specific curriculum areas. This is particularly the case in Auckland where, although about a third of those students interviewed say they have a weakness in an aspect of classroom practice, about three-quarters also say their confidence has increased. In Wellington, although about a quarter say they have a weakness, about a half say their confidence has increased, and in Christchurch the proportions are about a third compared with about a half.

Curriculum Areas

Just over 50% of the students in Wellington and Christchurch, and slightly fewer in Auckland, said that they have a weakness in a particular curriculum area. The range of subjects mentioned was wide, with mathematics, music, and science being most frequently mentioned, but even these were mentioned by seven or fewer students at each college.

When it came to increased confidence in a curriculum area, mathematics was also the subject most often mentioned. In Christchurch, 13 of the 33 students interviewed said that their confidence in mathematics had increased, as did six students in both Auckland and Wellington. Science in Wellington and reading and art in Christchurch were the only other curriculum areas in any college where more than five students referred to increased confidence.

Classroom Practice

For students in all colleges, increased confidence stemmed from a general feeling that they were simply more comfortable in the teacher role. They were now able to get up in front of a class and know what they as a teacher should or might do, or, if they were not sure, not to panic. As the students put it:

> Just getting up in front of a class. (Wellington)
>
> How to walk into a classroom and manage what they are doing. (Wellington)
>
> Actually facing a classroom with 30 children. I couldn't do that before I had my training. My confidence in the classroom has increased and I now feel I can get in and work with them. (Christchurch)
>
> Being able to get up in front of a class and give the impression that I know what I am doing. (Christchurch)
>
> Standing in front of a class: just standing there and teaching. That freaked me out to start with. (Auckland)
>
> Just to get up and do a lesson without getting all worried about it beforehand. If it's going to go wrong it's going to go wrong, basically. (Auckland)

In a wide range of individual comments, students concerned with perceived weaknesses or skills they needed to develop referred to:

- classroom organization and management
- planning
- discipline and control (particularly how to manage disruptive pupils)
- development of resources

- maintaining children on task
- what you can expect from children of different ages and abilities
- questioning skills
- blackboard writing.

Students were likely to say that they have had experience with individual pupils and small groups. Their concern now is with how to cope with a whole class while at the same time managing groups and not overlooking individual children. About half a dozen students said their confidence in the classroom depended on the age group of children concerned. These students tended to be confident with younger children and less confident with children of intermediate age, which for some of them was the age they hoped to teach. In mentioning these areas of concern, students acknowledged that they still had another year of their training to go and expected that many of these issues would be addressed.

Typical student comments were:

> Mainly in control, because I had F2s and I asked, "What can I do without raising my voice?" I came back to college and asked my tutor and he gave me some good ideas, maybe that should have been suggested before we went on section - different methods you can use without having to yell to get attention. It's still a weakness but it has improved from my first section. (Christchurch)

> The big one is conflict resolution in the classroom and how to create a healthy, supportive classroom atmosphere. On section the thing I found most difficult to deal with was conflicts between kids. Planning and management and content of subject areas is not a big problem, although I still need to work on it, but it's [in] that area of interaction between children and children, and children and me, that I need some more skills. (Christchurch)

> It's not teaching the subjects so much, for example reading and maths but organizing the classroom. As second years we haven't had a chance for full control, we've just been working with groups. (Christchurch)

> Classroom management. Getting the kids to do things

> without beating them! (Wellington)
>
> I think it's an ongoing thing. We do one lesson and then we go away, but to do whole days of lessons and to have several groups all going at once - that's what I'm not sure about. (Wellington)
>
> Well, I think I have weaknesses as a teacher but I think I'm getting better. Certainly I can see that in a couple of years' time, there is hope for me! It's hard to say, "Yes, I will be a good teacher", but I know I'm more comfortable in my role as a teacher but I also know there's an awful lot more to learn. (Auckland)
>
> Probably improving my questioning skills - just how to get more out of children. I suppose the control thing too in different situations - what's acceptable discipline in art compared with maths. We did some questioning skills in an education course. We saw how important it is but it's something you've got to get into a class to develop. You can't just sit in a room by yourself and improve your questioning skills or your discipline skills. (Auckland)

Could Students Cope in the Classroom If the Course Finished Tomorrow?

We have already seen that 21 of our interview sample of 105 students across all three colleges believed that they had no specific weaknesses or skills that still needed to be developed. This is not to say they were arrogant or overly confident. In the words of three students:

> A few were addressed last year - the skills you were hung up on, but I think now half way through the course any major weaknesses have been identified and something has been done about it. I haven't really got any. (Auckland)
>
> I don't think there's any specified one thing. In general it would be an ongoing thing to develop a teaching method and style that you're comfortable with. The more time spent out in schools the better, because you have time to experiment and work out ways that are set for you. (Wellington)
>
> One was teaching music last year but I've got over that and I think I can do it quite successfully now. This year I'm looking at everything with open eyes and just accepting it as it comes and giving it a go

> whether I get it right or not. Give it a go, get it wrong, fix it and try again. (Christchurch)

We have also seen that even those students who acknowledge specific weaknesses frequently also say that their confidence has increased. We wondered at this stage in their training - midway through their second year - what proportion of students already believed they could manage in the classroom. We asked the question:

> *If the college course was to finish tomorrow, do you think you could cope in the classroom?*

There were differences by college, but we were surprised overall at the high proportion of students who answered, 'Yes' - 85% in Wellington, 74% in Auckland, and 58% in Christchurch. (The graduate students in our sample were not asked this question, as they were nearing the end of their two-year training anyway. We will see elsewhere in this report (p.150) that when we discussed the length of their course the majority felt two years was the right length.)

The student responses suggest that a significant proportion of the third-year trainees believe that their training is perhaps longer than needed. Several made the comment that if less time was wasted, particularly in the first year, they could be ready for the classroom sooner. However, the question needs to be treated with caution. Having experienced a further year of training, the students may well reconsider their view in the light of the content of their third year. Furthermore, although a high proportion believed they 'could cope', coping and running a successful classroom may be two different things. A number of students referred to the need they would have for continued support once they were in the classroom, and others indicated that although they could cope they might not be able to do as competent a job as they would like.[2]

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[2] We will have more information on student views about the length of their training when we ask the complete cohort about this issue in our final questionnaire.

Those who said they would not be able to cope were often aware that there were curriculum areas they had not yet covered, or that they just needed more confidence and experience in the classroom before they felt comfortable with a class of their own. It is only possible to speculate about the differences between colleges, some of which may relate to the college experience and some to the background and personality of the students concerned. An explanation for the lower percentage of students in Christchurch who felt ready to cope may relate to the fact that within our sample we had B.Ed. students who had spent less time in college than other students. There was also a higher proportion of students straight from school.

A College View of What Makes a 'Good Teacher'

From the outset of this study we have had a problem with the concept of a 'good teacher'. We assumed that in an institution concerned with teacher education there must be a view of the qualities and skills needed to be an effective primary school teacher. We also assumed that these qualities and skills would be implicit or explicit in the aims of the institution and conveyed to students through the lecture programme and other experiences they had at the college. Furthermore, as our own study was concerned with the 'progress' of students through their course of training and out into the classroom, we needed to have some definition of a successful student and teacher - certainly some criteria by which to judge their experience.

We asked the students in our interview sample:

Are you aware of a college view of what makes a good teacher?

Table 4 summarizes the student responses by college. It will be seen from Table 4 that for all colleges the majority of students did *not* think that there was a college view of what makes a good teacher. There were differences by college. Students in Wellington were more likely than those in Christchurch and Auckland to believe that the college did have a view of what makes a good teacher. In Auckland, fewer than half the number of students, compared with the other two colleges, thought the college had such a view.

Table 4

Student Responses on the College View of What Makes a Good Teacher

	Auckland		Wellington		Christchurch	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	8	*21*	16	*47*	13	*40*
No	22	*58*	15	*44*	17	*51*
Don't know	8	*21*	3	*9*	3	*9*
Total	38		34		33	

We are aware that the question itself may not be a meaningful question to ask not only because of problems with the concept of a 'good teacher' but also with a view of what is 'the college'. As the study has progressed we have become increasingly aware that although students are part of an institution they tend to judge their training very much by their own personal experiences with individual lecturers. We were not surprised then when the most usual reason for students saying either that there was not a college view or they were unsure, was because it was 'up to the individual lecturer', or 'it varies slightly from lecturer to lecturer', or 'everybody has a different view'. Students were divided between those who thought this lack of a college view was acceptable, because 'it's good for everyone to have different views', and those who thought the lack of a college view was simply a reflection of the fact that the college had not articulated one. Regardless of the merits of the initial question and whether or not it is answerable, the students' responses are of interest because they both reveal the inherent problems in answering this question and also indicate the range of opinion of students in their second year of training about the qualities and skills necessary to be a good teacher.

There were differences in the students' responses by college but it is not possible to quantify them. The students' responses tended to fall into two broad categories of the personal qualities of the teacher and of skills related more particularly to classroom practice, although it was not always possible to distinguish between the two. There were also isolated references to the need for teachers to continue their own education and improve their qualifications. The following is a summary of those skills and abilities referred to by students:

1. Personal qualities
    - good communication skills, articulate
    - good personal relationships, particularly with children; friendly and approachable but still 'the teacher'; firm; warm and caring
    - confident
    - enthusiastic
    - patient
    - adaptable and flexible
    - tolerant and open-minded
    - reliable
    - honest and fair; able to admit to not knowing the answer; not opinionated
    - dedicated and committed; prepared to give up own time
    - non-threatening
    - creative
    - fit and healthy
    - culturally aware
    - resourceful
    - possessing a sense of humour

2. Classroom practice

- aware of and able to cater for individual differences, including ethnic and gender differences, and for children with special needs; activities appropriate for age group
- have clear objectives
- ability to plan and evaluate
- have effective and varied teaching strategies, including the ability to start from where the children are and to provide plenty of 'hands-on' experiences
- provide a stimulating and creative classroom programme
- ability to motivate children and keep them on task
- encourage children to be independent learners
- good classroom organization, management, and control
- discipline fair but friendly
- set a high standard for children
- provide programme to suit class
- clear goals; children know what is expected of them
- a self-evaluating teacher
- a culturally sensitive programme

There is in the students' comments an almost complete absence of any reference to a knowledge of the curriculum or subject content. Reading the student responses one has the feeling that the 'good teacher' possesses a range of personal characteristics and is a warm caring person, sensitive to individual children's needs, who plans an appropriate programme, but that the mastery of curriculum content tends to be overlooked, unless this is so taken for granted that it does not need to be stated.

Do Lecturers Present a Coherent, Co-ordinated View of How Children Learn?

For reasons similar to our interest in whether or not students perceived there to be a college view on what makes a good teacher, we were interested to know whether they thought lecturers presented a 'coherent, co-ordinated view of how children learn'.

Table 5 summarizes the student views by college.

Table 5

Student Views on Whether Lecturers Present a Coherent, Co-ordinated View of How Children Learn

	Auckland		Wellington		Christchurch	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	23	*61*	17	*50*	17	*52*
No	12	-	12	-	6	-
Don't know	3	-	5	-	10	-
Total	38	-	34	-	33	-

It will be seen from Table 5 that there were differences between the colleges, with nearly two-thirds or 61% of the Auckland students thinking lecturers did present a coherent, co-ordinated view of how children learn, compared with half (50%) the Wellington students and just over half (52%) of those from Christchurch.

♦ Students who answered 'Yes'

These students, if they added supportive comments, tended to make general statements such as, 'Yes, I think they do', or 'Most of them do', or 'The good lecturers do'. Other students added qualifying remarks:

* Basically 'Yes', with a slight variation between departments.

* Most of them do because most of them have been classroom teachers at some time. The most effective tend to be those most recently in the classroom.

- In as far as they can in a situation which is removed from the classrooom.

- There is consensus within some departments, for example, reading.

♦ Students who answered 'No' or 'Don't know'

The student responses included the following comments:

- Lecturers differ from one another in their views of how children learn. Different lecturers follow different theories but they tend to 'head in the same direction', for example, children learn through concrete experiences; the teacher needs to start where the children are at.

- It's hard for students to pick up a coherent or co-ordinated view, because there is so little co-ordination between subjects:

> The English people teach English, the physical education people teach physical education, and social studies teach social studies. We really learn about children learning through theories in the education department. (Auckland)

- One of the reasons for differences between departments is that some are more practical than others, for example, physical education.

- Students couldn't expect a coherent and co-ordinated view because there is so much debate about how children learn.

- It takes a while for students to consider the different viewpoints of various lecturers, work out where they complement each other and where they disagree, and then come up with their own philosophy.

- Lecturers tend to be more interested in their own subject than in how children learn.

- Children learn rather differently in different subjects.

- There is a difference between what students learn in college and what they experience in schools.

- Students who have done university courses find it hard to remember where they picked up what information.

Range of Quotes

> It's quite good that everyone does have different views because then you can try them out yourself, because children are not all going to learn in the same way. It's quite good to have alternative ways to think about how you could teach something if they are having problems learning it. (Auckland)

> Science and education have different views. Our science lecturer was quite horrified at what education says. No coherent views. Learn more through science than education. (Auckland)

> But that's what makes it interesting because different people have different views of how children learn. It's particularly different for different curriculum areas which is good, I think, because they are not moulding you into thinking that this is the way children learn. (Auckland)

> Basically yes, especially those ones that have just come out of schools in the last few years. They are right on to it. (Wellington)

> At least one thing you learn is that you change. At the beginning you go into your different lectures and you think, "Right, this is it. Obviously this lecturer knows what he's doing. This is the right way." And then you get another lecturer and they have another idea and then you get another one and you start thinking, "Now hold on a minute, what did I really believe at the beginning?" You go back to that and then you take in different things from lecturers that suit you. But you don't realize that until later on. (Wellington)

> Not at all. I think they all have quite different views. I don't think they do actually. There are lecturers here that are really nice people - most of the people here are really nice - but in terms of presenting a "together" group of people, I don't think they are at all. I think there are still some aged hippies here who think that the alternative schools of the 60s are the way children should be taught now. Then there are others who think that equity issues are a luxury that should be done away

> with. (Wellington)
>
> Within the education spectrum there are two extremes - there are behaviourists and humanists. There's a really broad range. Behaviourists are all free time and discover through play and at the other end there's the sit up straight, crack the whip sort of thing. I think the lecturers range within that - there's a really broad range. (Christchurch)
>
> Only really in education have I come across that although some of the subjects attempt to say. Phys. ed. for example, they say you don't teach children certain skills at a certain age because they just can't cope. It's there in some subjects but only in education can you get a real appreciation of it. (Christchurch)
>
> Again every department is different. Every lecturer will have their own views because they've been in the classroom. Educationalists have a statement. They stick to the same statement how children learn and then you go to another department, for example, the science department and they will tell you how children learn. So each department is fine and I suppose if you would take a bit of everyone you would find out what the best one is. They tell you theirs and someone else will tell you theirs and I haven't picked up enough on section to be able to make my own way. (Christchurch)

Student Views on How Children Learn

We asked the students whether their views on how children learn had changed since the beginning of the college course, and, if they had, in what ways.

Most students thought their views had changed. There was a slight variation between colleges but, judging by the students' comments, the differences are less likely to relate to different course content or approaches within the colleges, than to differences in what students already knew (or believed they knew) about how children learn before they entered college. The most common reason for students saying that their views about how children learn had *not* changed since the beginning of the course was that they felt they already knew quite a bit about the process before the course began. This was usually because of previous experience they had had, perhaps as kindergarten, music, or Sunday school teachers, or as sports coaches. A few students referred to university courses or the influence of other members of the family, usually mothers, who were also teachers, or the fact that they themselves were parents. Students who said their views had *not* changed often added a rider that their views had been confirmed, strengthened, and broadened.

Although there was variation in the comments made by students there was nevertheless a general change in their perception; they are still seeing themselves in the role of teachers but they are beginning to focus on children as learners. In the words of three students:

> I used to think children were a pot you poured knowledge into. But I've changed a lot. Children bring their own agendas into the classroom. (Christchurch)
>
> Child-centred learning. I was probably not aware of that and actually handing over the responsibility to the children themselves. You really just stimulate them and give them ideas and they actually teach themselves. Because I've always been such a busy, responsible sort of person, I'm used to doing it all but it's really up to them. (Wellington)
>
> When I first started I didn't know how children learn. I just thought that the teacher came in and had it all together and the kids sat there and soaked it all up... (Auckland)

A few students had trouble with the question we asked because they could no longer remember what they had thought about children's learning at the beginning of the course. It was interesting to note that when students referred to their own learning experiences by way of an explanation of what they had previously thought, they tended to refer to their most recent learning experiences in secondary schools rather than to their experience in primary school classrooms. There were, for example, isolated references to taking notes from the blackboard in preparation for the school certificate examination.

What follows is a summary of the range of comments made by students across all colleges. It is not possible to quantify the number of students who subscribed to each point. The list is interesting as an indication of the views held by many students now in their second year of training.

The ways students' views on how children learn have changed:

- A more child-centred approach; a greater awareness of children's individual differences and needs.
- The importance of a child's previous experience.
- Children do want to learn.
- Not all children learn in the same way or in the same way all the time.
- Teachers need to be flexible in their approaches; there is merit in a range of methods.
- Teachers need to find out what the children know; to build on what they already know; the importance of interactive teaching.
- A greater awareness of the need for children to become independent learners; handing the responsibility for learning over to the children.
- Children are not empty vessels to be filled.
- Children learn what they want to learn not what teachers want to teach; children need to pose some of the questions. It's the child who does the learning and the teacher cannot control what learning will take place - teacher as facilitator rather than teacher.
- Children learn best when they are actively engaged and the programme is practically based; the importance of active, hands-on, learn-by-doing discovery approaches; learning is 'changed behaviour'.
- Children need to be motivated by making content interesting and fun; children are more likely to learn if they enjoy what they are doing.
- The importance of home background, particularly differences in cultural experiences.
- Why children do not learn.
- There's a difference between rote and meaningful

learning.

- The value of shared, co-operative learning; children learn from each other; the influence of peers.
- Learning principles are the same for various ages - including very young children.
- But children do learn different things at different stages; age appropriateness.
- The importance of positive reinforcement.
- How to break down content.
- The importance of the teacher's manner and methods, and the classroom environment.
- Children are capable of learning more than previously thought.
- Learning is a more complex and interesting process than at first thought.
- Learning about children's learning is a lifelong process.

The following quotations illustrate the range of student views:

> When I first came in I thought if they didn't learn you rammed it down their throat until they learnt. I now realize that you have to be really careful and look from the child's point of view more. A child learns a lot from one-to-one experience if they are slower kids which I didn't know before I came to college. Realized it's much more complex and interesting than I did before. (Auckland)

> When I got here I thought you give them the textbooks, open it, mark it, but now I can't stand textbooks. You are just there to guide them, and advise them. To provide the opportunities and to encourage them and not just there to drum the information into their brain. I agree with hands-on help. (Auckland)

> You can't just sit children down and expect them to learn by 3 o'clock. You are more or less offering a child information, you encourage the child to learn, you promote learning, but it's up to the child to do the learning. (Christchurch)

> The way children learn differently. Different styles of teaching. I have to use a variety of teaching methods and that if the teacher can't succeed in getting through to the child there's

nothing wrong with using peers. Being aware that to teach you don't have to be up the front but to make yourself available. (Wellington)

I didn't really think about the way children learn. I suppose I thought that you taught them in a similar way to the way you were taught but you weren't as mean as your teachers were, that's all. I just thought you gave them books and co-ordinated with them and you decided what school production there was going to be at the end of the year, and that's it. I didn't really think of the whole concept of how children learn. But when it was put to me and ever since then, I think it's the most important thing. And it's also common sense, that they must learn in different ways. The other thing I find really interesting about all the things I've read is that nobody really does know how children learn and that every child learns, probably in a different way. And I think that's really exciting in terms of being a teacher. (Wellington)

I never knew much about how children learn but now especially reading - that's just amazing! Different ways you can teach children - just everything - how many things they learn in a year - in a day! Amazing. (Auckland)

I wasn't aware of how much it has to be hands on, experience based. I had no idea how little children learned from teachers and how much they learn from each other. Interactive teaching is really important. Learning is a long-term process. It's built on all the time. (Christchurch)

Definitely. They don't learn by sitting down listening, they have to actually be doing things. Learning is a change in behaviour - so for a behaviour they've actually got to be doing something or something's got to happen to them or be an experience so yes it's changed the way I thought kids learn especially young kids. (Auckland)

My idea of a teacher when I came here was to be an inspiring witty, central person in the classroom who made the classroom such a fun place to be. I was going to revolutionize. I was going to be one of those personality teachers. But now I realize that for children to learn they have to have the skills themselves. You are not always going to be around to inspire and lead. You have to give them the skills, so I now feel the best teachers are in the background helping the kids with learning. I think it's quite a healthy change. There are still people who believe in personality teaching but I think the responsibility should be away from the teacher and on to the children. (Wellington)

The Main Influences on Students' Teaching Style

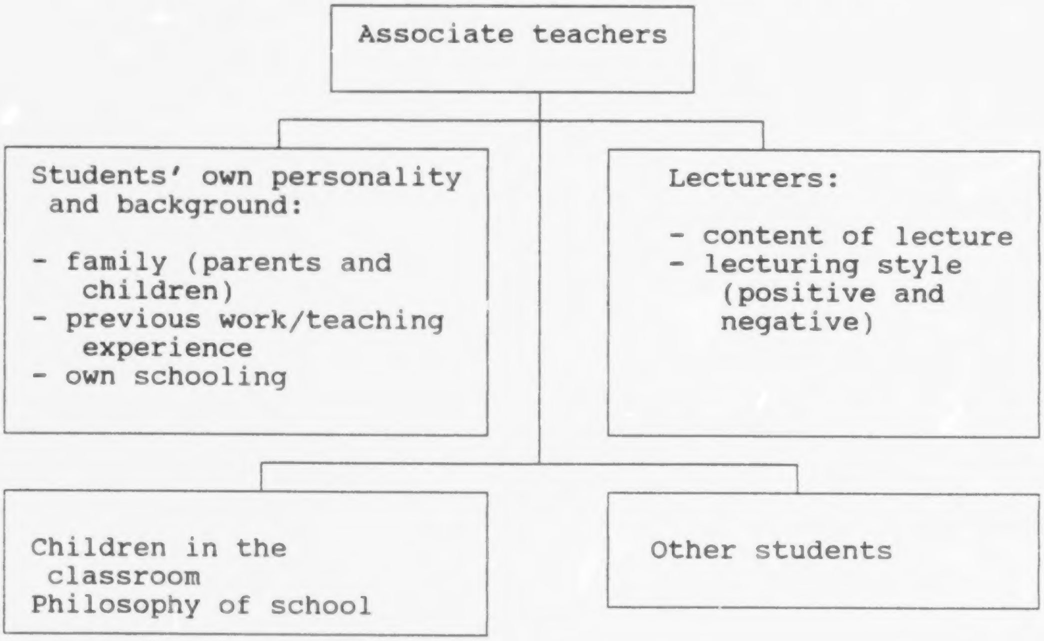
Students were asked what they thought had been the main influences on their teaching style.

The range of student responses across colleges was similar although the importance attached to particular categories differed. For most students the main influence is their experience with associate teachers while on teaching practice sections. Students from Wellington were the most likely to refer to qualities of their own personality linked with previous experience. This was also true for Auckland, although it was aspects of a student's previous experience rather than their personality as such which were more likely to be referred to. In Christchurch, by comparison, students were more likely to refer next to the influence of the college itself through its own lecture programme and the lecturing style of lecturers (both good and bad). The influence of the college was the third most important factor for students in Auckland and Wellington. Diagram 3 summarizes the student responses.

It would be a mistake to try and read too much into these apparent trends. What is clear is the paramount importance students attach to their experience in classrooms, and the fact that for many students their own personal biography is as important or more important in influencing their teaching style as the college programme itself. However, it is important to acknowledge that students do also recognize the influences of particular courses and particular lecturers.

Diagram 3

Main Influences on Students' Teaching Style


Associate teachers
Students' own personality and background:
- family (parents and children)
- previous work/teaching experience
- own schooling
Lecturers:
- content of lecture
- lecturing style (positive and negative)
Children in the classroom
Philosophy of school
Other students

The sample of quotations illustrates the range of influences described by students:

> Section I think because even though they talk about it in college, it's good when you go out on section and are there for four weeks. You are seeing the whole atmosphere continuously - you see different things. (Auckland)

> Feedback from other people, both tutors and especially associates. People who have actually been watching us teach so we know what we're doing right and what we're doing wrong. (Christchurch)

> Sections - seeing how children react to how you do. Watching teachers and thinking. "Yes, I could do that, or no, I couldn't do that. It's not my style". (Christchurch)

> Seeing others teach, whether it be lecturers or trainees, I think had been a big influence. Especially our sections observing associates in the way that they control the class, or present certain material so that it is interesting with the children. (Wellington)

Good ideas from associates as far as control is concerned. And I think a lot has to do with when you get out to your class. Once you've got to know them you'll know what works for them best, what suits that child best. It's going to what sort of parents they've got, their age, how emotionally developed they are. (Wellington)

Own personality. What you feel comfortable with. If you're not a loud person or authoritarian, no one can tell you to be like that. Education has helped. Questioning techniques. Little subtle control measures you can use - I've used them on section. (Christchurch)

Probably your own personality more than anything. The person that you are. Your own enthusiasm. (Wellington)

My kids and their teachers. When my kids come home from school with work, I hijack it and photocopy it. My son says, "Mum, I've got some more handouts for you". I've seen what they do at home.... (Auckland)

Nothing here. I think my mother would be the main influence on my teaching style because she is the main influence on me as a person and the way I treat other people. I think essentially my mother always treated me as an individual and an equal to her and that is the way I treat children... (Wellington)

Probably a big influence is the teachers I've had in the past. That's still a really big influence. Also the lecturers I've had here because the lecturers who are enthusiastic about their subject automatically make me enthusiastic in teaching the subject. (Christchurch)

Talking about science and how to teach science has had a really big impact about letting the children find things out for themselves. Seeing teachers on section. I don't think my style would be the same as them and so seeing that was good because it made me clarify things. It's good when you get a chance to sit down and observe someone who's been teaching for quite a few years and think, "Well, that seems to work, and that doesn't". (Wellington)

People I've chosen as a role model.... Not because of what she does here but she was my visiting lecturer on section and she gave me heaps of practical advice so I have a lot of respect for her. I respected her for her political views in college but when I had her as my visiting lecturer she wasn't up in the clouds. She actually had really

> good practical, effective ways of teaching ... and also ... because she's an older woman but she's still pretty staunch and again she's an effective teacher, not just her political views ... if you are able to bring the political together with the professional and that's the sort of person I'd like to be I suppose. (Wellington)

> Different lecturers have been a big influence - their attitudes and style. Language and education would be the main areas. Very positive influences. (Auckland)

> The people in my class last year. My whanau was just such a marvellous bunch of people - mostly unacademic, who just put such energy and love into what they're teaching and just get so much out of kids it's just really amazing to see how they do ... they fail mostly in the system of passing tests yet they are such wonderful teachers and they've been a big influence on me and how to teach. (Auckland)

Are Students More or Less Motivated To Teach Than When They Began the Course?

We asked the students whether they were more or less motivated to be a primary school teacher than when they began the course.

It will be seen from Table 6 that more than 80% of students in all colleges say that they are either more motivated to be primary teachers than when they began the course, or about the same. The percentage is highest in Christchurch.[3]

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[3] Nineteen students from our interview sample had left one or other of the colleges by the time we interviewed students in the second year. Had these students still been at the college, they may also have regarded themselves as 'less motivated'.

85

Table 6

Students' Motivation to Teach

	Auckland No.	%	Wellington No.	%	Christchurch No.	%
More motivated	22	31 *82*	16	28 *82*	20	29 *88*
About the same	9		12		9	
Less	7		6		4	
Total	38		34		33	

Most students added an explanatory comment, and the comments made tended to be the same across colleges.

Those students whose motivation is the same:

- * These students usually considered themselves to have been motivated to become primary teachers when they started the course, and have remained so.

Those students who are more motivated:

- * By far the most important factor in increasing students' motivation to teach is their experience on teaching practice. This is particularly the case in Auckland.
- * Students who referred to teaching practice typically spoke of valuable experiences they had had with associates, although there were a few critical comments about associates they considered to be unsatisfactory.
- * A second important aspect of teaching practice was the pleasure students had in working with children which they also saw as a factor in increasing their motivation to teach.
- * Some students acknowledge the part the college programme played in maintaining or increasing their motivation to teach, although most are less likely to give credit to the college than they are to their experience in schools.

- Others acknowledge that it is the combined input of the college programme along with their experience in schools which increased their motivation to teach.
- Usually students who are more motivated are also more confident in their ability to cope in the classroom. Through experience or teaching practice, students realize they have, or are developing, the skills to be good teachers.
- There were a few students who were still motivated to teach but were also more anxious now that they more fully appreciated the complexities of being a teacher.
- A few students had what could be described as a mission to use their skills for the betterment of the system - 'The children out there needed them'.
- A few students thought their own personal development and maturity had increased their motivation to teach.

Those students who are less motivated:

- Some have mid-course, mid-year blues.
- Some are not sure whether teaching is for them (they may have wondered this even before they came to the college).
- Some are frustrated by aspects of the college course including what they saw to be irrelevancies and wasted time.
- Some are not confident in the classroom.
- A few wonder whether the hard work is worth what they consider to be the relatively low pay of teachers.
- Financial concerns at college, as well as problems such as distance to travel to college, also contribute to students wondering whether the course of training is worthwhile for them.
- A few students have begun to wonder whether primary teaching is the branch of the education service for which they are best suited.

There were comments made by two or three students who were motivated to teach, but concerned with developments in the education service about which they were unsure. These students were influenced by the views of other family members who were also teachers. A few students also noted that although they were motivated at present this did not mean they intended to spend long in the classroom.

Regardless of whether students are more motivated to be primary teachers than when they began the college course, or about the same, many students are impatient to get the course behind them; to get out into the 'real world' of the classroom. This impatience to be actually doing what it is they are training for may well be typical of students on most courses of professional training, particularly at the mid-point of the course.

Range of student quotations:

> I'm more motivated because of all the knowledge and resources I've got since I've been here. You want to put them to use. You feel excited about going out there. (Wellington)
>
> I'm more motivated. I don't think I was particularly motivated when I started the course, so it just goes to show the place does have an effect. (Wellington)
>
> Much more because of my teaching practice. Every time I go into the classroom I don't want to come back to college. That's good because that's what it's all about. (Wellington)
>
> I think I would be more motivated. It's just from getting ideas here and then going out and teaching the children and seeing the feedback you can get. Probably more motivated but more worried about whether I can do it or not. The more you find out about what a good teacher really is, you start to think, "Oh, I can't do that". There just seems to be so much to do and so much to think about at the same time when you are teaching. But I'm really looking forward to getting out there. It will be good. (Wellington)
>
> It's confirmed what I came in with. I really believed that I could offer something to the children through previous work experience, through my own life experience and through learning. I just can't wait to get out there and be part of that system and share it with the kids. You learn from

them too. (Wellington)

More, much more. I think it's just having a bit more experience every term you go through. I've been here a year and a half now and you know you're half way through. You've done three sections and you think of the rest of the time to go and you just want to get out there and teach. (Christchurch)

Only on section. Sometimes I think, "What am I doing here?" I'm so bored. But on section it's completely different. I just think, "This is what I am here to do". Sometimes I have doubts. I think, "What am I doing at college? Do I really want to be a teacher? Do I want to go out and make money now? Do I want to get a proper job where I am not being paid a pittance?" And then I go out on section and the reaction is completely that I want to be a teacher. (Christchurch)

I'm still very motivated. I haven't lost my enthusiasm at all. I think it's probably because we've learnt a lot more. We are more aware of different methods and approaches. Quite exciting once we get out and can apply the knowledge. It's just the waiting around to get out. (Christchurch)

Some days I'm more motivated because I think, "I've just got to get out there and help those poor children because they are really suffering". I don't like the way the system's changing. Children still have to learn and someone has to teach them. Hopefully, I'll be a good teacher. I just want to get out there! (Christchurch)

I find learning and education really fascinating. There's heaps to know about it and I find working with children fascinating. One of the reasons I decided to go teaching was that I wanted a job with variety and where there would be different things all the time and that definitely is what goes on in the classroom. (Christchurch)

I'm more motivated because I've always come away from my section thinking, "Yes, this is what I really want to do". It doesn't matter whether I've had a good section or a bad one. I've always enjoyed the children and I have had good associates, although at times some of the experiences I've had have not been so good. (Auckland)

Less motivated by the college but more motivated out in schools. (Auckland)

I'm more motivated. It's not like a job it's like an interest. It's like someone paying you for something you like doing. I really like working with kids ... I like being here because I get to go on section and be with children all the time. I think when I leave here I will be a real teacher. The more I get into it the more I like it and the more I want to do more. (Auckland)

When I'm on section I'm more motivated because I'm out there - learning a lot. I've got the opportunity to be with children, to teach, to be involved. It's like I'm already out there in my own classroom. When I'm at college it's a let down and I'm less motivated. I'm just told what to do and you're not actually experiencing it. (Auckland)

...Sometimes you think "So, this is never going to end". I can't be bothered. At other times you feel so motivated. I'm going to be the best teacher ever. It equals out.... I'm probably more motivated now to be a secondary teacher.... Primary teaching is a lot of hard work and not a lot of extension for your own ideas. Once you get older children they have more ideas and you can enlarge on those - especially through doing varsity and really going in depth into novels. Now I'm much more excited about that than I am about doing a 50-hour course for TC. I put a lot more effort into varsity than here. (Graduate) (Auckland)

STUDENT PROFILE 3

Huia says it took her a while to settle into the college but she likes the atmosphere and 'feels quite comfortable now', although she finds it difficult to single out things the college does well. She feels there is a lack of communication among the college staff, which leads to poor organization, leaving students unsure as to what is happening. She thinks there are too many chiefs and not enough Indians. Huia is not very happy about the balance between compulsory and optional courses as she would have preferred to have had more choice and to have done more optional courses. Of the courses she has done she thinks the language courses, both English and Maori, will be the most useful for her as a classroom teacher because it is so important for children to have good language skills. Physical education will also be useful because physical activity is necessary for children, including those with disabilities. Anything that helps children to move freely and to improve their co-ordination is useful.

As a Maori student Huia was particularly disappointed with some of the problems that surfaced in Maori studies courses. One of the problems was that the lecturer was hindered by the need to help less experienced students, so that Huia did not feel she covered the ground she would have liked to. Huia felt that in the Maori studies 100 course the more experienced students should have been separated out. There were only two Maori students in the class she was in and she was 'a bit hacked off' because, as she said, she already had Maori aroha and she wanted to learn Maori language. The other 40 students in the class were from other cultures and the lecturer had to spend most of the time getting them involved in wairua and aroha when Huia was anxious to get into te reo. The problem, according to Huia was that the Maori studies 100 course was compulsory but she should have been allowed to go on instead of being held back by the others. Some of the Pakeha students also felt that they already knew quite a bit of what was covered in the course and were also anxious to move on to te reo. Huia feels that perhaps it has been sorted out this year because of the bilingual classes, not that this arrangement is without problems. The Maori students are finding it hard because they have to do so many compulsory subjects that they have a heavy workload. She feels there should have been some way of integrating Maori language into the compulsory studies. According to Huia, there were also problems with science 200 because graduate students joined the group who had not done the work last year and those already in the group had to cover the same ground again. New ground was covered in the second year but not as much as there should have been. Both art and craft and audiovisual studies were an improvement this year. Last year there was a predominance of theory in art and craft but this year it was more practical and more fun. (Huia was concerned about the additional costs associated with the course, especially as students had already paid fees.) The audiovisual course in the first year had covered 'really basic stuff' but this year was more advanced with the focus on film and video. There was good continuity between the second and first year in most of the other courses Huia took.

Huia's confidence has increased in nearly all areas. She cannot speak Maori as fluently as she would like and she wants to improve both reading and her English language. She is doing a course in both of these areas at the moment. Despite these weaknesses, Huia thinks the course is too long for her. She is confident that if the course were to finish now she could cope quite well in the classroom and would prefer a two-year training.

Huia thinks the college focuses on the development of students both as individuals and as classroom teachers. She thinks students are treated as individuals and she has no problems expressing her own views and opinions to lecturers.

Huia had some criticisms to make of the college methods of assessing students last year and she is still not happy with the system. At present there are two different forms for assessing students and she thinks the college should have a standardized report form. She is satisifed, however, with the assessments she herself has received and she feels more skilled at assessing her own performance. She is happier than she used to be to admit that she is wrong and she thinks her ability to accept criticism is, in the long run, 'for the betterment of children'. Huia feels she has learned to assess children both through college courses and on section when she was helped by the visiting lecturer. She has had experience at determining children's reading ages and the week after we interviewed her she was expecting to do some work on assessing children's ability to 'form relationships'.

In her first year at the college Huia did not feel she had enough advice to make a decision about undertaking university study and she decided against it because she was worried about the college workload. She has stayed with that decision.

When we raised the equity issues we wished to discuss with Huia, she felt the college is doing very well as far as sexism is concerned. She thinks students have been made aware of this issue 'all the time' in both optional and compulsory courses. She thinks everyone around the college is very aware of sexism, and students frequently talk about gender issues. Before she came to college Huia had worked in the army. As she said, 'It's hard work being a woman in the army'. Even though she was aware of that fact, Huia feels her own behaviour has changed since coming to college. She also thinks the college is doing quite well as far as racism is concerned. The social studies and Maori courses are helpful. The fact that teachers need to be aware of cultural difference is raised in most courses, especially courses focusing on children with special needs. The health courses were helpful in encouraging students to be aware of issues relating to socio-economic status when they went out into the community to do project work. Students had to focus on health issues in the community. Students must also understand the background of children when on teaching practice section.

Huia is less sure that the college addresses biculturalism as an issue and in her view will not do this until all courses are integrated so that they can be taught bilingually. She thinks the Treaty of Waitangi is still an issue the college needs to address. Huia does not think staff discuss issues related to school reforms in any depth with students because she thinks they do not know much about them. Huia would like to know more about the boards of trustees. As she says she would, '... hate to say "good morning" in Maori to her class and get sacked for doing it!'

Huia thinks that a good teacher should be firm but fair, flexible, honest, reliable, well organized, approachable, and healthy. She thinks it is very important that teachers are culturally aware, and helpful if they are musical. The main influence on her own teaching style would be watching both teachers and students and deciding which methods appear to be effective. One of the important things she has learnt at college about how children learn is the distinction between fast and slow learners. Huia took a seminar on rates of learning, including retention rates, which she found interesting to work on.

Huia is more motivated to be a primary teacher than when she began the course largely because she is now much more confident in what she knows. She realizes the difficulty the college has with teaching practice sections in placing all students which means that teaching practice times have to be staggered. This led to timetabling problems for Huia which prevented her from taking some courses.

Huia's main worry at the moment is that the tertiary fees are too high. She was disgusted with the then Minister of Education, Phil Goff, who did not even come out and see the students when they marched on parliament.

STUDENT PROFILE 4

Brent is enjoying his second year at the college. He thinks it's more like a family situation and he has settled in well. He can't believe how different it is from what he had thought it was going to be which has made him much more confident. He thinks lecturers are particularly good at providing students with the information they need to cope with teaching practice, for example, lesson plans in science. Brent thinks lack of communication is a major problem at college even with the tutorial system when administrative notices are meant to be read out - this does not always work. The notice boards are hopelessly cluttered and difficult to read so that it's hard for students to know what is relevant and what isn't. He is disappointed that the students never come together as a year group. At the beginning of his second year he went into classes and saw people he had never seen before - he was surprised that they were second-year students.

Brent is enjoying all his courses this year except for education which he did enjoy in his first year. This year he's finding the various theories of education 'way over his head'. There is nothing to relate the theories to. He thinks the lecturer knows what he's talking about but finds his way of putting it across to students confusing. Brent talked about this with his last associate, who said that after she had been out teaching for a couple of years she began to understand what it was all about but she agreed that she went through college without doing so. Brent really likes reading because it makes him think of what it was like when he was at primary school and how much more interesting it is now with guided and shared reading. Before he started the course he had no idea there was so much to the process of teaching reading. He really enjoys the response of the children on section when he takes them for reading in groups. Brent thinks the course in physical education follows on well from last year's course and he has found the emphasis on how the body grows to be valuable. He's surprised at how much he has enjoyed science. When he heard they were going to be studying rocks his reaction was, 'Gosh how boring!', but the way the lecturer went about taking the topic made the students want to participate. He found the introduction to discovery learning helpful. Social studies provides a different approach from when Brent was at school, too. Instead of just focusing on countries, the current syllabus deals with peoples' feelings, an approach that Brent enjoys. Art is a subject Brent has always enjoyed and he has had a chance to develop his own style in art at the college. Of all the courses he has done he thinks social studies, reading, and science will be the most useful for him as a primary teacher.

Brent does not think the college treats students as individuals, nor does he consider the balance between courses that focus on the individual development of students and those that focus on students as future classroom teachers is right. It depends on the subject, but most courses focus on the classroom. There is one subject Brent would feel uncomfortable talking about with certain lecturers and that is the suggestion of some Maori students that they would like to form their own class for education. He thinks everyone should be treated as one.

The marks Brent has received have been what he expected. He thinks the system of assessment has improved this year and students now know more clearly what is expected of them. It's over to the students how much they do and whether they go for distinction passes, which require more work.

When we talked about the various equity issues Brent did not think sexism was an issue in the college nor did he think it was discussed in class. He thinks that although there is not meant to be racism in the college it definitely is there. He thinks that in some courses the lecturers 'turn a blind eye' which he does not agree with. He has also been concerned with the behaviour of some of the Maori and Pacific Island students at the hostel who 'just like stirring'. This behaviour turns other students against them, which is frustrating when the majority of students are decent. Brent is not doing any course in the Maori department this year. He was disappointed in last year's course because it did not deal with multicultural issues, only with Maori issues. There are many Indian and Asian students in the local schools and Brent does not feel he knows anything about their backgrounds. If anything, his experience with Maori studies has made him more negative than he was.

Brent's confidence has increased in most of the areas he was concerned about in his first year. Previously he was really anxious about computers but since then he has done a course which he enjoyed and is consequently quite relieved. He is now aware of how useful computers can be in the classroom. Brent was also apprehensive at the thought of teaching maths because he was no good at maths in primary school, but by the end of last year his confidence had definitely increased. On Brent's last section most of the lessons he took were in maths and although he was nervous for the first lesson, all went well and now he even feels confident about teaching decimals!

He does not think the college has a view of what makes a good teacher or a co-ordinated view of how children learn. Brent thinks a good teacher is one who is approachable and prepared to listen. He also thinks teachers need to be well organized, and children need to know what's expected of them. If a teacher is not confident, that affects the children. Brent thinks he has learnt more about how children learn through science than education. (One science lecturer was 'quite horrified' at what education says.) His own views of how children learn have certainly changed. Before coming to college he had no idea there were so many different approaches. Most of his memories are of secondary school when the teacher demonstrated and the pupils just sat and took notes. There was little equipment in the classroom and teaching was mostly by the teacher up front giving directions. He has been most influenced since coming to college by the teachers he has had on teaching practice.

Brent found it hard to answer our question about whether or not teaching practice sections were co-ordinated with the rest of the college programme - sometimes they are and sometimes not. The main problem is that students are often asked to look at things at a time when the class is not doing them; for example, in their first year before the May holidays students were meant to look at the beginning of units, but the classes all tended to be finishing units. This year Brent was supposed to take a science lesson on work that the class had finished in the first term. When Brent joined the class they were concentrating on language units.

Brent is definitely more motivated to be a primary teacher than when he began the course. This is partly because his confidence has increased in a number of subjects, which has made him want to get out and teach, but also because now that he has seen what type of person makes a good primary teacher he realizes that he is also that sort of person. He thinks he would be able to cope in the classroom if the course had finished during the second year, although he would have had to rely on the support and guidance of other teachers. Brent feels he is also lucky that his mother is a teacher so he feels he knows more of what goes on in the classroom than some other students. He thinks three years is probably too long a course. He knows third-years who sometimes only have one lecture a day and are bored. Brent has noticed that he has more spare time this year than last - the lectures are shorter and there are fewer of them.

As for the rest of the course, the main thing he thinks he needs to know more about is general classroom management and how to plan for groups. He finds how to sort out the various abilities of children something he has not had enough experience with yet. He thinks this would be helped if there was more practical experience in the course.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT – GENERAL ISSUES AND PARTICULAR PROBLEMS

General Issues

When we began our study in 1988, officers of the Department of Education, as it was then, expressed their concerns about assessment procedures in the colleges. They made the point that in their view:

> 'standards required to obtain a Diploma of Teaching were not made explicit enough by the colleges';
>
> 'assessment procedures in college were not explicit enough and too many subjective decisions were being made about student competence to teach'; and
>
> 'where standards were defined they were not strictly kept to'[4].

All of these comments illustrate a perception on the part of the Department of a need for colleges to be, in the current terminology, accountable. As a result, we were asked to include assessment as one of the areas in our study. The research questions for the second phase of the study state that we are to 'investigate and report upon the performance of a sample of students during the second and third year of their course of teacher education in terms of the assessments the colleges themselves make'. As the students are midway through their second year at the time of the interviews, we can only partially answer this question. In this report we will discuss general issues as they affect the colleges, present the views of students on assessment, and give a description of the assessment procedures used at the three colleges in our study.

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[4] At least one college principal has since commented that these views had not been communicated to the colleges.

We make no claim to have conducted an exhaustive study from every perspective of the issue of assessment in teachers' colleges. Assessment is just one of the many issues that we have covered in seeking a *student* perspective of the college course. In order to answer our research questions, we have obtained the college assessments of students in our sample of students, and to help us analyze this material we have collected college statements of their assessment policies, and discussion documents on assessment (*see* Appendix 4). What is offered here is a 'window' on assessment as we found it; we are aware that there is more that could be said. We hope this study will raise questions, stimulate discussion, and give a reasonably accurate picture of how students felt about the issue at the time of the interviews.

When we started to ask the students questions about assessment, it became apparent that not only did the colleges differ from one another in the methods they use to assess students, but individual lecturers had different practices. Furthermore colleges were in a state of flux, and changes in assessment procedures have been implemented in all of the colleges since the start of our study. In our view the colleges are just beginning to emerge from this process of change, having examined their assessment procedures and entered into debate about the whys and wherefores of assessment, with written statements of their assessment policies. The issues are complex and it is not easy for colleges with large numbers of staff to take time out from their busy schedule of lectures to discuss these issues. Once some consensus has been arrived at by staff as to what is to be the basis of assessment in the college, it then takes time to develop new assessment procedures and to inform and train staff. It is also difficult to monitor the new procedures to make sure they are being carried out correctly and in keeping with the theory behind them. Some of the comments from students mentioned later show the problems that can occur as new systems develop. The appointment in Auckland to a new position of adviser to the staff on assessment, moves in Christchurch to create a similar position, and the appointment in Wellington of a senior lecturer in assessment and evaluation, all demonstrate the importance colleges attach to assessment.

Our particular study has had, as its main focus, the student view of the college course, and in this and our previous report we outline the comments students have made on assessment, as part of their reaction to the course. The students' remarks reflect concern about issues to do with assessment that are being debated on a much wider front than in the colleges of education. In a number of countries - for example, Canada, Australia, the United States, and the United Kingdom - assessment is an important part of a general examination of education systems that is currently taking place. The Black report in the United Kingdom has made sweeping recommendations about national assessment of children. The impetus for the examination of education systems with a particular emphasis on assessment, in these countries as well as in New Zealand, seems to stem from a perception that education systems, particularly schools, are failing. Their 'failure' is that they are producing people who:

(i) do not have the knowledge and skills that will lead to employment;

(ii) if they are employed, cannot do what employers want them to do and, in many cases, do not have basic skills.

This leads many people to ask, *What is it then that schools are doing?* In addition, because education in these societies is largely state funded there is concern over the outcomes of the education system, and the need for societies to be reassured that they are getting value for money. This point of view tends to lead to the conclusion that assessment should be used to provide more accountability in education.

A second strand in the debate is that there is also a need when someone has completed a course to say what it is that the person can do at the end of it, and possibly how well they can do it, that is, a recognition by way of a credential such as a certificate or diploma. In our study, students from colleges of education want to be able to show a prospective employer that they have successfully completed the course and can now teach. They also want two other things:

(i) some recognition for the work they have put in on the course, and

(ii) verification that they achieved certain standards.

Yet a third view is that assessment for the two reasons given above is at best, irrelevant, and at worst, damaging to learning; according to this view, assessment should only be used as an aid to learning, a tool to be used to gauge where individuals are in their learning with a view to furthering that progress.

In the context of education, therefore, there are three purposes to assessment:

- for accountability
- for the award of credentials
- as an aid to learning.

In New Zealand, Project ABLE (Assessment for Better Learning) - the working party concerned with assessment - has, in its discussion document, highlighted and discussed these differing viewpoints and asked the public to consider the reasons why we should have assessment in our schools: whether they want to see one type of assessment or another, or a mixture; whether the use for one purpose undermines the usefulness for another purpose; and whether the same instruments can be used for different purposes. Whilst

Project ABLE is addressing assessment at the school level, these same concerns with accountability and the debate on the purposes of assessment are very much alive in the tertiary sector, including colleges of education. The process of debate started in colleges before our study was under way, but the comments of the students clearly indicate that it was proceeding during the period of our study and is continuing.

The comments made by those students who are the subjects of our study show some concern for accountability, but they also reflect other needs which, to them, are as important. One of their first needs is to be able to monitor their own progress as they go through the college course and their comments show that they expect the assessments they receive to help them. They are looking towards assessment to be an aid to their learning. This form of assessment is referred to as 'formative' assessment. The criticisms made by students about inconsistencies and the lack of differentiation between students highlight this need to have a better basis from which to compare their own progress from year to year. All three colleges have made changes to the way students are assessed during this time, and some students commented that the changes have not always been a help to them in this regard. One student expressed the view of a number when he said:

> I don't care what system they use as long as they don't keep changing it!

Changes that have been introduced into the colleges have often been made with a view to helping the students with their learning, and sometimes in response to student comment. However, perhaps there is a need for students to be more aware of the basis for their assessments, so that they are more comfortable about changes that are made.

The student comments also reflect their views of how the assessment procedures fulfil their other over-riding need, which is to have a credential, in the form of an accurate record of what they have achieved, to present to prospective employers. These are among the first cohort of students who are going through college without any guarantee of a job at the end. Under the previous system, students at the end of their courses were placed in schools for two years to complete their certification. Students now have no guarantee of jobs at the end of their course, and they will have to compete for the jobs that are available. At the time of the graduate group interviews that were conducted as a part of this study, some of the graduating students had already gone through the process of applying for jobs and many of the other students, even though they were only in their second year of a three- or four-year course, were very conscious of having to find employment at the end of their course. The comments from students reflect their situation in a changed environment. Under the previous arrangement, a system which recorded only whether a student had either passed or failed courses could be satisfactory from the student point of view, as long as their need for formative assessment was being fulfilled as they progressed through the course. There was a need for a credential, because of the restrictions placed on teaching without a certificate or diploma, but there was little or no need for any detailed record of what a student had achieved at college because, at the point when they left college, they were not competing for jobs, but were placed in schools. They then spent two years in schools, during which time they had the opportunity, whatever they had achieved at college, of proving themselves in the classroom *before* they were competing in the market place for jobs. Now, however, where there is competition for jobs at the point where students leave college, it becomes important for them to be able to show prospective employers a written record which contains some detail about what they have done at college and the *standard* to which they have performed. In addition, it will be helpful to the student if employers can differentiate between students on the course in terms of the kind of person they are seeking to appoint. For example, if a school is looking for a music specialist, it should be able to tell from college records which students can perform this role.

It has always been important to students that their time at college prepares them well for their career as a classroom teacher, and that during their time at college they are given accurate assessments of how they are performing during the course, what it is they need to learn, and what they need to do to achieve that learning. But, in addition, their comments show that students see a need for:

- *quality* in the evaluation of their performance;
- *accuracy* in the rating given to their performance, and the rating not to be undermined by an impression that no one fails;
- *consistent assessment* of their performance both within and between departments, and preferably between colleges; and
- *validity* in the methods used to assess them.

It is still important to students that they are prepared for their long-term task of teaching in the classroom, but the exit point, at the end of their college course, has assumed an importance for these students that is much greater than previously and makes assessment critical for them.

Colleges are certainly aware of this and have been making changes to try and meet student requirements. However, the colleges also have other requirements:

- a desire to provide a model of assessment for students that can be taken into the primary classroom;
- the need to be accountable to the educational community and society for the standard of teachers they produce; and
- the need to be accountable for the government money spent on training teachers.

These are just some of the issues mentioned to us during our visits to colleges.

Particular Problems

As we had in their first year of study, we asked students to comment on the methods that had been used to assess them in this, their second year. The majority of comments from students reflected their reaction to the particular way students were assessed in their courses. For example in *Wellington* most comments (22 of the 33 students) were about new report forms which had been introduced in 1990, in particular student dissatisfaction with the categories available. On the new forms students could be assessed as either 'satisfactory' or 'outstanding', and many of them felt that this did not sufficiently cater for the range of ability amongst students, or recognize the varying effort that students put into projects. As one student commented:

> It annoyed me personally and I know other people, that you could be conscientious and do all the work and attend every lecture and hand in your assignments on time and get the same tick in the satisfactory column as somebody who you knew had only been there haphazardly and you knew they were late and got big extensions and you were not given any extra credit for that, or they weren't given any extra negative credit [*sic*] for that.

The report forms also require students to assess their own performance on the course. The way this was done, where students were asked to put their comments on the form before lecturers gave them a grade, saw some students being less than honest about what they thought of the course, in case this influenced the lecturer's view of how they had performed on the course. If students feel that the course was a problem, they find themselves in a difficult situation, a point emphatically made by this student:

> I tell you what, no student runs it (the course) down because after that evaluation the lecturer has to put on their evaluation. The lecturer should give you their evaluation of you ... and then you write your evaluation. This other way round, we are all human, and if I got a note from a student saying

> "what a crappy teacher you are and I wish you weren't here", I tell you it would be really hard to write a positive comment about that student.

A couple of students also found themselves wondering whether future employers would see the forms which again influenced them not to be too negative about their own capabilities when writing their comments on the report forms.

The main concern of students at *Auckland* was dissatisfaction with a change to the assessment system which increased the range of grades available to students, so that in 1990 students could be marked fail, pass, merit, or distinction compared to the previous year when they could only achieve fail, pass, or merit. Their concern was not with the addition of the extra category, distinction, but their perception that, for a number of departments, the criteria for achieving distinction included having to produce greater quantities of work rather than better quality work, as noted by this student who said:

> I don't understand why for distinction you have to do more work and it is more quantity than quality. Seems to be an extra load of work. You can do things by half and still get a distinction - it's all on quantity rather than quality - which I'd like to see it on quality.

Or this student who is also taking university courses:

> I do university as well so you know you can't do everything, so in that way it's not good, because even if you make your assignments really good you still only get a pass, not merits or distinctions.

In particular these requirements were felt to disadvantage:

- students enrolled for university study - who might also be the students expected to achieve higher grades, and
- students with families - who had greater pressures on their time.

Of the 33 students we interviewed at *Christchurch*, only five made positive comments about assessment at the college. Their comments illustrate the concerns discussed earlier that these students have about competing for jobs at the end of their course. The main concern of students here was what they saw as inconsistencies in the assessment process. Twenty-two of the students felt that assessment needed to be standardized, both *within* college and *between* colleges, as the quotes from these two students show:

> There are certain inconsistencies. It's not consistent between departments and within courses. A friend of mine who's a second year, who's done a course six weeks before me could come out with a B, and I could get a pass. So the courses in some subjects are changed which I don't think is fair especially when we come out for jobs and things.

or:

> Apparently the other colleges are getting A, B, C grades, which is great, but we've got a lot of courses which are pass/fail, which doesn't really mean anything, just that you've done the bare minimum. If you actually put in heaps more work or you're really strong in an area, you've got a pass/fail. It seems a good idea to have the graded assessment for when we'll all be out on the job market. We're going to come up against people from Otago, Auckland or Wellington, and if they've got the graded pass it's going to look good. Definitely it'll look more than someone who's got a pass. So I think it's quite important.

(A lecturer at Christchurch observed that the pass/fail grading system was instituted in response to student request.) Our interviews took place in the second term, by which time the criticisms we heard had usually already come to the attention of the college staff and in most cases changes had been made.

Other Comments on Assessment

Other comments which the students made about assessment and which were common to all three colleges were not about problems with any particular system of assessment operating in colleges but reflect their concern with wider issues of assessment. Similar comments were also made at last year's (1989) interviews and were made again in 1990 because these are problems which cannot be 'fixed up' by the college, but raise basic questions about why these students are assessed. Comments were made about:

- The relationship of assessment to the curriculum, in particular the inappropriateness of some methods of assessment used.
- Inconsistencies both within and between departments and between colleges.
- The lack of strictness in enforcing standards - some students seem to feel that a few students get by with doing very little work.
- The lack of differentiation between students - 'hard work is not recognised', according to some students.
- The lack of consistency between the way they are taught to assess children in schools and the way they are assessed in college.
- Lecturers who do not know students well enough to assess their progress.

A small number of students made positive comments about how they were assessed at college. They were pleased that certain forms of assessment were not used at college - that marks, grades, and examinations were not part of the assessment at college. They were pleased at the comments used on assignments and the use of peer assessment in some classes.

Assessments Students Themselves Have Received

In all three colleges students were generally happy with the assessments they had received themselves. Although they had some criticisms of the system, they felt that, with one or two exceptions, assessment procedures were applied fairly. However, they would have liked the assessments to have been tailored more to their individual development - to indicate how they were doing in particular courses and to suggest how they could improve. Some students felt that lecturers did not know them well enough as individuals to be able to do this.

Self-Assessment

The majority of students in the three colleges feel that they have become more skilled at assessing themselves since they came to college, mostly because of the opportunities afforded to them by the college course to practise the required skills. Students increased their ability to assess themselves in a variety of ways. In Wellington students have to assess themselves regularly at the end of each course, whilst other students gain their experience during teaching sections or micro-teaching. However, some students feel that they would like still more practice.

Assessment of Children

We also asked students whether they had learnt anything about assessing children in the classroom. Most students were able to give at least two or three courses, often more, where assessment of children had been covered. In reply to the question *What have you learnt?*, students gave a wide range of examples of what it was they had learnt, from general comments such as 'to look at each child as an individual' and 'to assess children's capabilities'; to giving the names of specific tests such as Burt and PAT tests. The answers to this question suggest that they have learnt something about how to assess but not much about why they should assess. Whilst our phrasing of the question may have influenced their answers, very few students offered comments which illustrated that, to date, they had dealt with more than the mechanics of assessment.

In response to a further question about where they had learnt about the assessment of children, large numbers of students mentioned specific curriculum courses. Reading courses are where most students in the three colleges have learnt about assessment so far, followed by mathematics, professional studies, and education. Other courses mentioned are science, health, social studies, and physical education. Some students, particularly those from Auckland, had been shown assessment procedures by associate teachers when on section.

Whilst we are interested in where and how students learn about assessment, the fact that some courses cover assessment more than others does not mean that those courses are any 'better' and the ones that are not mentioned are 'worse'. Some curriculum subjects, such as reading and mathematics, have well developed, nationally prescribed courses that are taught in schools, such as the 'Ready to Read' and 'Beginning School Maths' programmes. These courses have assessment procedures built into them, and terms such as 'running records' and 'six year reading nets' roll off the tongues of student teachers. Other subjects do not have the benefit of such explicit assessment procedures.

In addition, students are giving us their experience at a particular time and this has an obvious influence on the comments they make. At the time we interviewed students in Auckland, they had recently returned from a section where, as part of the section brief, they were to have talked to associates about assessment methods in the classroom in preparation for covering the topic at college. One or two students referred to assessment being covered in the next semester, the second half of 1990.

The College Assessment of Students

Most of what we have reported back on assessment has been the student view of assessment and how it meets student needs. In answering our research question, we were also to investigate and report upon a sample of students in terms of the assessments the colleges make. Each college has a brief statement about assessment of students in the college calendar. They also have their policies in written form available to staff (*see* Appendix 4). There has been a move away from 'norm-referenced' assessment towards 'criterion-based' assessment in all of the colleges, but this is a process which takes time to work through, and in Auckland and Christchurch there are still elements of the two systems existing side by side.

In *Christchurch* some courses list a set of competencies which students have to achieve to pass and students either pass or fail. Other courses have a set of criteria graded A, B, and C, and students are awarded an appropriate grade based on their performance on the course. In some of these courses students can elect the criterion for which they aim. On the report forms which summarize a student's performance for the year, + or - is used with the grades A to C giving a larger range of grades. It is a little unclear as to how the + and - are applied, except that they seem to be used to show that a student has performed a certain criterion well or not so well compared to either what was expected or in comparison to other students.

In addition to the assessment for each course, the performance of each student is monitored at two points, mid-year and end of year, by a group of staff from the School of Primary Teacher Education. The group, which includes the Director of Primary Programmes plus year group tutors, discusses each student individually in order to monitor their progress. If a problem with any student's performance is identified, follow-up procedures are set in motion.

Auckland has moved to a similar system of graded criteria for each course. The grades available to students are pass, merit, and distinction. As in Christchurch, students can choose to aim for one of these grades. In 1989 students could achieve only a pass or a merit pass. Merits were awarded to students by lecturers if their work was considered above average. Each student's achievement is recorded on a college report on the teacher trainee, which is a cumulative record of student achievement. In a similar way to Christchurch, a group of primary school staff monitor student progress at mid-year and end of year. Students who are not performing to standard are identified and offered assistance.

In *Wellington* the system of assessment is a competency-based one, where the objectives for each course are set out on report forms. Every course has a report form on which students are assessed. If students have met the objectives of the course (and included in the assessment of whether they have met the objectives is a measure of self-assessment), then they are judged to have passed the course. There is also the option that a few students can be awarded an 'outstanding' rating if they meet further specified criteria. The progress of each individual student is discussed by a group of primary school staff and they are awarded an overall grading of either fail, cause for concern, pass, or outstanding. In 1990, of the 30 Wellington students for whom we were given information (we had 34 in our interview sample), seven were given an overall rating of outstanding. Also on the basis of their overall performance, two students were identified as of doubtful suitability for teaching.

An analysis of the students in our cohort who have left the colleges since the beginning of the course shows that very few are actually labelled as failures. Those who are judged not suitable for teaching are 'counselled out' of teaching, and encouraged to resign.

The performance of the students in our sample, as might be expected, covers a wide range. The majority are coping well with the course, some performing to a very high standard; the performance of a few only is a cause for concern. When we have collected the assessments of students' performance in the third year, we will be able to map out the assessment each student has received for the total course.

EQUITY ISSUES

One focus of the first phase of this study was student views on various issues of equity - sexism, racism, and socio-economic status. We were also interested in student attitudes towards biculturalism and the Treaty of Waitangi. There was much public debate at the time (and there still is) on the issue of whether New Zealand society is fair. As teachers obviously have a pivotal role to play in any public policy seeking greater equity, teacher trainees need to be prepared for this aspect of their professional role.

In the second year we again questioned students about the various equity issues by asking them:

* Whether their own views on any of the issues had changed since the previous year, and

* How they thought the college was addressing issues of sexism, socio-economic status, racism, and biculturalism.

Have the Students' Views Changed?

We have had trouble with the analysis of the data generated by our first question. Firstly, what does 'change' mean? Many students had strong views on these issues when they arrived at college and rather than 'changing' their views, they tend to have affirmed them. Secondly, students did not always remember what they had thought the previous year, so had trouble deciding whether or not their views had changed. Thirdly, 'change' can be in two different directions, and simply to know that a student's views had changed does not necessarily tell the researcher much, although students did usually add explanatory comments. Fourthly, there is a danger that change may be regarded as a good thing in itself, that we expect students' views ought to change.

We now realize that the concept of 'change' as we used it is dubious. What is of more interest to us now are the views students are affirming and why. We are modifying our methodology for our third round of interviews. Prior to the interviews we will send each student a copy of the transcripts of statements they have made previously to refresh their memory of their earlier comments and use these as a basis for our discussion with them.

Table 7 summarizes by college the student responses to the question of whether or not their own views had changed. Despite our own reservations about this question, the student responses and their explanatory comments do raise various issues worth noting.

Table 7

Changes in Students' Views on Equity Issues

Issue	Auckland	Wellington	Christchurch
Sexism	2	17	12
SES	7	3	14
Racism	10	11	13
Biculturalism	7	9	8
Total	38	34	33

Students Whose Views Had Not Changed

Regardless of 'issue', students whose views had *not* changed, usually said this was because they did not regard themselves as either sexist or racist on entry to college, and nor were they now. An exception would be the student who, in discussing sexism, said her views had not changed because of her religious conviction that, 'God made man first'. Similarly, one or two students considered that some lecturers and students made too much of sexism as an issue and tended to 'go over the top'.

Students who said their views had *not* changed because they were aware of the issues prior to coming to college nevertheless frequently added a rider that they did now have a heightened awareness of the issues.

1. *Sexism*

As only two Auckland students said their views on sexism had changed, the following comments are from *Wellington* and *Christchurch*. The students who said their views had changed usually gave one of these reasons:

(i) Now acknowledged that 'sexism does exist' (Christchurch)

(ii) Perhaps not changed so much as more vocal, increased understanding:

> I think I always didn't like sexist language and didn't like to be put down because I was a woman, moved on a little bit, become more vocal, but I'm not one of these really radical, raving people. (Wellington)

(iii) Increased awareness:

- started to notice own behaviour
- influence of college after particular school background
- think about it more as an issue
- aware of sexism in schools
- aware of sexist language in books.

(iv) Sexism amongst male lecturing staff

> ... they should take some of the courses available at the college. (Wellington)

(v) Increased awareness because of university courses. (Christchurch)

2. *Socio-economic Status*

Regardless of college, students who said their views on socio-economic status had changed made comments which related either to:

- an increased awareness of the effect of SES on children, mainly through observation in school, or
- concern about increased fees, the effect this had on themselves as students, and the fact that the proportion of middle class students would increase.

As was seen in Table 7, Christchurch students were considerably more likely than students from the other two colleges to consider that their views on socio-economic status had changed. Those who gave an explanation tended to refer to their own backgrounds and the fact that it was not until they came to college and visited schools that they had really experienced children from lower socio-economic groups. For example:

> My background in Nelson was pretty comfortable. Coming to Christchurch was like opening a window and seeing the other side of a frame. Not everybody had a comfortable life like me.
>
> At all the schools I attended you've been able to do whatever you liked and I've always been able to tap on a computer at school and Mum's always been involved in whatever we're doing at school like going on camps or giving us money for class trips. We've never had to stay behind because we couldn't afford it. I suppose I never really realized that happened until I came down here and went on section in a poor school ... It was a Catholic school and we went to this production at Easter for the church and it was 50c or $1 for the bus and some kids, a full classroom, had to stay behind because the parents couldn't afford it...

3. *Racism and Biculturalism*

We have combined the two issues of racism and biculturalism

120

because when we raised the issue of racism, students frequently made comments which suggested that they immediately thought of Maori concerns rather than broader racial issues. They also tended to link racism with biculturalism as though they were one and the same thing.

Auckland

Those students who said their views on either racism or biculturalism had changed divided almost equally between those who said they had become more understanding and tolerant because of experiences at college, and those who said their attitudes were now more negative.

On the positive side students commented on the fact that:

* They were now 'less conservative' and 'more relaxed' about the issues. They used to ignore the issue but now recognized the reality of racism.
* Having been 'scared' they would not get into college because of their lack of knowledge of Maori, they now felt quite comfortable.
* They felt their experience to be limited because they were monolingual.
* Children from different cultures have different needs.

Those who said they were uncomfortable about biculturalism or were more racist than when they arrived at college instanced the experiences that had brought this about:

* A feeling that as Pakeha students they were 'put down' by the Maori department. An example given was the way an essay they were required to write on the Treaty of Waitangi was handled.
* Multicultural studies was directed towards Maori and did not cater for other ethnic groups widely represented in Auckland. The course, as it is presently run, should not be compulsory.
* The unfairness of only Maori students being in a position to qualify for a merit pass in multicultural studies because only they could understand Maori spirituality.

Wellington

All but one of the students in Wellington who said their views on either racism or biculturalism had changed, said that increased experience and understanding had made them more positive in their attitudes, for example:

> I'm a lot more aware personally and more sensitive towards them and that's definitely due to being here.
>
> I think my views started changing last year but I've become much more aware of the issues and much more aware that Maori aren't getting a fair deal, which I never used to think at all, and that they have different needs.
>
> I'm not sure whether my opinions on racism have changed or whether my opinions on people have changed. Being at college and at varsity has made me focus on it a lot more than I would have in the working environment but I don't know if it's changed my opinions. What it has done has made me think more about the issues.
>
> At school we never did any Maori language or studies at all so it's been great for me, it's just been a real eye-opener. Just the way they think and use natural resources and that sort of thing.
>
> My views on biculturalism have changed totally, because of the whole environment...
>
> Yes, because I've had access to a lot more information and I've never in my life before had any contact with other cultures. I never knew what it was like to be - I think of it now as privileged. I didn't value what I had because I didn't know I had it, and I do now. I see that life in that sense has been easy for me because I'm articulate, white and middle class and that background has made things easier ... I think the college has provided me with opportunities and experiences that I wouldn't have come across otherwise. It's helped me to grow a lot.

The exception was the student who commented:

> ... it's heading me off in the wrong way, making me more racist. I've now calmed down a bit ... after being sick and tired of having Maori language, and Maori this and Maori that rammed down my throat without any explanation as to why they were doing it.

Christchurch

As in Wellington, the Christchurch students we interviewed who said their views had changed, with one exception, claimed to be more aware of other cultures and to be more sensitive to different cultural values. Several students commented on the limited experience of other cultures they had had before coming to the college and the importance they now attached to being aware particularly of Maori and Pacific Island cultures. One student felt that her increased awareness was likely to be as much the consequence of university as college courses. The exception was a student who said she had become '...annoyed that the Maori people get all these grants and I'm struggling to pay my fees...'.

How the Colleges Are Addressing the Various Equity Issues

1. Sexism

Auckland

More than half the students made comments to the effect that sexism was not an issue at the college, or it was not talked about as an issue. The general view was that 'it's not really an issue here'. The explanation given by a few students for the reason sexism was not an issue at the college was because female students were so much in the majority, coupled with the fact that the males were mostly '...easy and outgoing'. Five women referred to sexist male lecturers although several conceded that as a result of staff changes the person they considered to be the worst offender had left the college.

A much smaller number of students, about eight, said that their experience in schools had made them aware of sexism, either because of classroom practices or the lack of women in senior positions. About an equal number of students referred to college courses where sexism had been raised as an issue. Some of these comments were very general, such as, '... it comes up in discussion in one or two departments'. Students who referred to particular courses mentioned health and science.

Wellington

Sexism was the first equity issue we discussed with students who frequently made overall comments before moving specifically to sexism. The common view is that the college is 'strong on equity issues' which 'play a big part in college life'.

Of the equity issues raised in the student interviews, sexism is the issue in Wellington where students were most likely to think their views had changed since coming to college. About 50% of students interviewed thought this was the case.

There were students who thought that 'lecturers are making a real effort' and 'all courses address equity issues', but more frequently students referred to particular courses. The most frequently mentioned were professional studies courses, including PS 200, various reading courses, women and girls in education, and gender equity in the classroom. Second were social and cultural studies courses, with a few references to science and health. As with students last year a few students indicated that the course on women and girls in education should be compulsory. As one student put it:

> As an institution the college is very aware but the assumption that we all understand the issue is not true. The gender equity course should be compulsory.

We were not expecting detailed comments on the content of the courses mentioned but issues students said were raised included:

- research on girls and boys in the classroom, particularly the finding that boys received more teacher attention than girls
- human development and the theoretical background to gender issues
- the need to get girls more involved in some subjects such as science
- the fact that some classroom resources, particularly books, may be sexist in content
- the need for teachers to be aware of their own

> practices particularly the use of sexist language, sexist practices such as not organizing classroom routines on a gender basis, and consciously addressing questions to girls and boys equally.

Brief mentions were made of other aspects of college life as examples of the ways the college was addressing sexism as an issue, for example, a 'strong and vocal' women's committee; having contact people for student complaints; poster displays; and student association handouts using non-sexist language.

Christchurch

About a third of the students said that they thought the institution was not sexist and that they had not experienced any sexist practices at the college, most staff and students being aware of sexist issues. The following quotations illustrate this point of view:

> The college is quite fair. I haven't noticed any extremities and I'm quite a feminist so I would notice. I think the lecturers are very careful (maybe they're different outside college, but within the college they are quite aware). Last year there was a sexist awareness week. Some of the students rubbished the idea but I thought it was wonderful.
>
> I think that it's being handled by the college. I don't think there's a problem. I think everyone at college is given a fair chance and there is no inequality between guys and girls.

About an equal number, however, thought the issue was largely ignored. One student who felt this strongly commented:

> For all the college might know, there is no sexism here - it isn't mentioned in curriculum subjects. It isn't mentioned that the material we use could be sexist. As far as this college is concerned sexism isn't a problem, and that's why I think it is.

Students who do think the issue is addressed referred to particular courses, by far the most likely to be mentioned being education. The issues likely to be raised in the education courses, according to the students, were classroom practices which discriminated between boys and girls, such as the tendency for teachers to address more questions to boys than to girls, partly as a control mechanism. Other curriculum courses were also mentioned by a minority of students, for example, reading, physical education, science, and an equity-in-mathematics course.

While students were appreciative of the courses that raised questions of sexism, it was common for students who also attended the university, or had done so previously, to say that such issues were more likely to be raised and considered in depth at the university, for example:

> It's not a big issue at college. I've done quite a bit on it but when I think back on it that was all at varsity. It was really a big thing in our education courses there in the first year, stage I. Even when it was covered in education at college last year, it was only one section out of the whole course. It's not really covered in any curriculum courses. Well some - we did collect a whole lot of research that different people have done about time teachers spend with boys as opposed to girls.

For many students, their heightened awareness of sexism as an issue stemmed from teaching practice sections, although it is true that this might not have occurred had the issue not been raised at the college in the first place. As one student put it:

> The college is addressing the issue of sexism and I think everyone is more aware of it. I know for myself that from the time in college this year I have made a special effort, especially going into the classroom, not to discriminate between boys and girls and I think that that is because the college has in all our courses talked about how we can handle the issue.

Several students also referred to male/female relationships at the college and the fact that women were in the majority amongst the students and men amongst the staff. Staff changes in 1990 improved the balance of women to men. Some students thought that the predominance of female students over male explained why sexism was not particularly visible at the college. Although some male students were 'unreconstructed', most were regarded as reasonable in their attitudes, and some females felt sorry for them in their position as a minority group. There were, however, one or two women who thought '...if you are male you've got it better here', suggesting that male students were favoured and 'cruised through the course' because of the need for male teachers.

2. *Socio-economic Status*

When students were asked how they thought the college was addressing the issue of socio-economic status, they tended to make similar comments regardless of college. Those students who said their views on socio-economic status had changed referred either to the financial worries of students or to socio-economic status with regard to children in schools. Students' comments about their finances were invariably related to increased fees. Students acknowledged that this was a political issue and not something the colleges could do much about. In expressing their concerns, students referred to:

- their view that student intakes would become increasingly middle class and Pakeha, as were the staff
- controversy over eligibility for hardship grants and/or reduced fees
- resentment because the personal circumstances of some students who received targeted allowances on the basis of family incomes did not justify their favoured treatment.

One issue connected with student finances which should be of concern to colleges is that of college and lecturer accountability to students. As one student put it:

> It's really getting at me. I had to pay over $2,000 and that's a lot of money to come here for a year. We're definitely not getting value for money. I didn't mind paying any varsity fees. I just sent off the cheque. But to pay it to come here! (Auckland)

A second issue is the need for the colleges to recognize 'the reality of student debt', particularly with regard to costs to students of such things as classroom resources.

We have already seen that Christchurch students were the most likely to have changed their view on socio-economic status and this was usually because of a heightened awareness of the effect of differences in background on children in school. Christchurch students were also more likely to make similar comments when they talked about how the college was addressing the issue. In fact students typically said that this was an issue that confronted them in schools but that the college did not do enough to prepare students:

> You don't notice it in college. You notice it when you go out into schools. College doesn't really help. You just get biffed into section and if they are low SES you learn it pretty quick and you learn the different SES value as far as schooling is concerned.
>
> No, I don't think it's addressed at all and I think it is bloody appalling because most of the schools I've been out to at least half the kids I've come in contact with have been from a different socio-economic group than I belong to and I don't feel I'm any good at dealing with those kids. I come from a different background and I'm not used to their class culture ... I don't know enough about it to know how it could be different.

Of the various equity issues we raised with students, socio-economic status was the one in all colleges which was the least likely to be discussed. In isolated references to college courses where the topic of socio-economic status had been raised, students referred to social studies and science in Auckland, professional studies and health in Wellington, and social studies and education in Christchurch.

3. *Racism and Biculturalism*

The question of how the colleges are addressing the issue of racism and biculturalism is the hardest of all to analyze and it is difficult to classify the students' comments. It is only possible to describe the range of student opinion rather than to quantify the number of students who might hold specific opinions, particularly as students, as well as giving their own views, sometimes referred to their perceptions about other students, including those they thought held racist opinions.

Auckland

Student opinion ranged all the way from some students who think the college is strong on these issues and tries to raise student awareness to others who 'wouldn't know if racism is an issue', and yet others who consider the college to be a racist institution.

No doubt because of the timing of the student interviews, the most frequently referred-to issue, mentioned by about a third of the students, was their reaction to the TV show, 'Holmes', and its account of the alleged favouritism to Maori students in the handling of a particular test. Even amongst those students who raised this issue however, opinions were divided, and those who regarded this as a racist issue were in the minority. The more common view was that the incident was 'blown up out of all proportion'.

This was a one-off incident. Of more concern is the attitude of students to the Maori studies department, and in particular the multicultural course run in 1989. Three students expressed appreciation of this course. More commonly students were critical, believing the course to be anti-Pakeha, and a few said that because of their experience they would not take anything further in the Maori studies department.

Few of the students in our sample were taking courses in the Maori studies department in their second year and for this reason thought biculturalism was less emphasized than in their first year. Several referred to the multicultural/bicultural debate, usually believing that multiculturalism was the real issue. Students had a mixed reaction to the establishment of a whanau group for students within the education department and to the arranging of students into three groups of Maori, Pacific Islanders, and Pakeha for some sessions.

In isolated references to courses where issues of racism were raised students mentioned science, music, reading, education, social studies, and English as a second language. A common comment here as elsewhere was that although issues might be raised by lecturers, students were rarely given any guidance as to how such issues might be addressed in the classroom.

Wellington

The majority of students made positive comments about the institution as a whole and the effort being made to increase student awareness of racism. It was also a common view that biculturalism is a major concern of the institution, the importance of Maoritanga and the Treaty of Waitangi being stressed. Students acknowledging their previous 'Pakeha dominated environment' say their attitudes have been challenged.

If students referred to particular courses, they were most likely to mention courses within the social and cultural department, professional studies, or Maori studies, for example:

> Sensitivity to racial issues is really pushed, especially in professional studies courses. Things like science and stuff are not really mentioned because it's not quite so obvious. There is a lot of emphasis on racial awareness and sometimes the lecturers try to get a multicultural perspective into their teaching.

The college and courses are not without their critics, usually for one of two reasons. Pakeha students may feel resentful if they think the college 'comes on too strong'. (A few also think Maori students get special treatment.) Some Maori students do not believe the college has really achieved its own objectives - for one this could only happen when all courses were bilingual. In the words of three students:

> It's a major thing here I guess (i.e., discussion of equity issues), but I've talked about it with my Pakeha friends, and sometimes you feel that you are

> in the minority here, that the Maori are the dominant race. That's really hard to come to grips with. I suppose they've been feeling that for a long time. So I found that quite difficult. But I'm getting more used to it now, accepting of their attitudes and I guess my own - changing my mind.
>
> I didn't really come here to be racist, but some things here actually make me feel like I'm being the one that's underprivileged - just special courses for Maori students. There's quite a division between the two - quite a big division actually. The Maori students all stick together. It's quite sad in a place like this where we're meant to be so bicultural.
>
> Racism is not really addressed - not following their own statements in the calendar. If they were into it as they say they are in the calendar - into the Treaty, things would be different. Like we wouldn't have to wait for our marae ... there's a lot of messing around here which says that Maori is unimportant.

As with students in the other colleges, there were several who thought that multiculturalism was the issue rather than biculturalism. There were also those who felt the more important issue was how to counter racism in the classroom and that as future teachers they had not been helped in this regard.

Christchurch

As with the other colleges, it is difficult to generalize about student reactions as to how well they think the college is addressing the issue of racism and/or biculturalism. The students present a confused picture. Compare, for example these two statements on racism:

> We don't really get a lot on that. I don't see it personally. I realize it's around and there are people around the college that hold quite strong opinions about it, but personally it doesn't affect me.
>
> We're being made aware of the race issue a lot more. In our Maori classes we're told about the importance of the Maori cultures within New Zealand and the multicultural society we live in. I think it is addressed well.

Similarly with biculturalism, one student was prepared to say that the college accepted biculturalism 'with open arms', while two other students commented:

> I suppose it is addressed but not given much priority.
>
> I don't notice it happening if it is happening. I suppose in social studies we do it.

In a range of student views the following comments were made:

* The college itself is monocultural which gives the impression that the subject is dealt with as from a textbook rather than in a practical sense.
* There are Polynesian students in the college who could be used as a resource, but are not.
* Goodwill on the part of the college does not translate into practice because of inadequacies within the Maori department.
* The Maori department does not have a prominent position within the college, exacerbated by the fact that lecturers outside the Maori studies department tend to avoid bicultural issues.
* Maori is optional and it is possible for students in the second year to ignore it.
* Multiculturalism is a more important issue than biculturalism.
* Students are not given strategies to cope with racism in the classroom.
* Courses which deal with biculturalism, other than those in the Maori studies department, mentioned by students were social studies, education, health, art, and English as a second language.

Examples of student comments were:

> I don't think it really addresses the issue. Unfortunately, although they like to think it's multicultural it's still very monocultural. I can't

give examples to back that up but I have the feeling that NZ is multicultural and they tend to emphasize the monocultural system and throw in a bit of Maori for good measure.

Yes, I don't think it's an issue here as nobody has to worry about it ... I think it would be more of an issue in the North Island. There are not many cultures in Christchurch College of Education - everyone here is treated as one group and no one is singled out as being a separate identity.

I've heard of it but I haven't actually come across it yet. We've had one from last section with another girl in our tutor group who had a little white boy in her classroom calling another coloured one a big bad boonga or something and a big fight broke out in the classroom. I thought "Wow, I didn't think that was going on anymore", so it's opening my eyes and everybody else in the tutor group. Our first question was, "What do you do in that situation?" We haven't had much of what you do.

It is addressed. It is touched on in health and education but I think people treat the subject too carefully. They're too worried about offending us. I've learnt through university that some of the stuff we're learning about you don't really want to hear but you need to look at the issue and say something should be done about it. Here, they're a bit careful.

SCHOOL REFORMS

When we interviewed students six months into their college course, we asked them whether there had been any mention in their courses of changes taking place in the school system because of the proposed education reforms. The majority of students said such issues had not been raised, except by a few individual lecturers in response to students' queries. We wondered if the situation had changed and we repeated the question in their second year. In the meantime the educational reforms have been introduced in the school system. One Wellington student commented that it was hard for students to tell whether issues related to the reforms were being discussed by lecturers because *Tomorrow's Schools* has become so integrated into the system 'you're not sure when they're talking about it and when they aren't'. For a second student, the problem was that as she was not familiar with the previous system it was hard for her to know whether or not the current system was any different from how it had been previously. With these provisos in mind, at least half of the students in each of the colleges either said that the issues were not raised, or only in passing. If issues were raised, there was rarely any detailed discussion and there was a lot of confusion. An explanation for the lack of comment given by a number of students was that the lecturers themselves did not fully understand the changes, for example:

> They say, "We don't know". The lecturers here don't honestly know what's happening with their jobs, let alone anything else out there. Their advice to us is, "Be on your toes, be well qualified, be dynamic and wonderful!" (Christchurch)

> Not really. They're a bit vague about discussing the specifics of *Tomorrow's Schools* because I don't think they know anything about it. I don't think anybody does really. It's still on trial, isn't it? (Wellington)

> Basically most lecturers are really uncertain about it still. There's a generally negative feeling. It's still settling in and no one quite knows how it's working. (Auckland)

One explanation for why some of the Christchurch students thought the educational reforms were talked about more this year than last was because the recent staff changes at the college had brought in new lecturers who had recent school experience and they were more likely to raise the issues with students. This view certainly coincides with the majority view of students from all colleges that they were more likely to find out about changes in the school system when they were in the schools on teaching practice sections, than from discussions in the lecture room.

> No. Full-stop, no! I don't know anything about the changes because of *Tomorrow's Schools*. The only things I've heard have been by opening my ears in the staffroom on section. (Auckland)

> I haven't been in one lecture where it's been talked about but on section the teachers and headmasters were pulling their hair out because they had more board of trustee meetings and they didn't know where to go for this or that any more. It was quite chaotic and stressful for both staff and principals. (Wellington)

> Mainly on section and mainly negative. Just all the extra work with teachers becoming more accountable, which is good in itself ... but a lot of the teachers were just thinking of all the work and administration which gives them so much less time in classroom preparation and creative thinking.... Also they are thinking of possibly cutting out holidays when staff are spending half of them at school now anyway. It appears they are trying to get more mileage out of teachers and they are

> getting more and more worked up and ground down. It's quite discouraging because it's all so negative. (Christchurch)

For Auckland students issues were more likely to be raised in tutor groups, for example:

> No, they don't talk about it much. I'd really love to know what's going on. Sometimes our tutors are pretty clued up and they've got the time to talk about it. In the last one we talked about teacher registration - we didn't know about it.... It would be nice if there was say, one lecture a month, just to inform us.

Similarly, in Christchurch professional studies tutorials were sometimes an occasion when such issues were raised. For Wellington students, discussions that took place were likely to be in professional studies courses. There were few positive comments about changes in the school system recorded by students either in the information they had gleaned from lecturers or from school staffs. The prevailing message was of negative reactions and anxiety. An exception would be the student who said:

> We're accepting it, mainly because we're going into teaching it. We're having no problems with it. Going out into the classroom I haven't actually seen any problems yet.... The school I went out on section to was just flying through it with ease ... (Christchurch)

One or two students from each of the colleges who were also taking education courses at the university said they had learnt more about the educational reforms there.

> Very good at university. The lecturer we had virtually followed the newspaper articles that are really very relevant to us. Education at university is so appropriate for teachers that I wonder how other people who aren't doing education as a degree subject are finding it. The university course is so focused on the development of teachers themselves. From our point of view it is excellent. (Christchurch)

When the educational reforms were discussed in college, students mentioned the following issues as being those most likely to be raised:

- The increased power of parents and the role of the boards of trustees.
- The writing of school charters.
- The effect of the changes on student job applications and appointment to teaching positions.
- The need for students to get good grades in college and to be better qualified because of the competitiveness of the job market.

A few students commented that they thought issues related to the school reforms were more likely to be discussed by final-year students. We will have to wait and see if that is the case.

UNIVERSITY STUDY

The number of students in our interview sample taking university study compared with last year is shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Number of Students Interviewed Undertaking University Study

College attended	1989	1990
Auckland	11	16
Wellington	12	16
Christchurch	18	16
Total	41	48

The table shows that in the second year of the course there has been a slight increase in the number of students enrolling in university courses.

The majority of students who were *not* taking university courses in 1989 intended to do so at some stage in the course. Many had not enrolled at university in their first year because they wanted to settle in at college and get some idea of the workload; having done so, some have taken on university courses in their second year.

The increase has been most marked in Auckland where all first-year students at the college from 1990 onwards are enrolled in a B.Ed. programme. This seems to have been a motivating factor for some second-year Auckland students taking on university study, or continuing with study they had started last year. Students interviewed expressed the view that they would be competing for jobs with students graduating not long after them, the majority of whom would have a degree. This development has reinforced the opinion of students given last year, that having a degree would be important to their job prospects. Some students also felt that having a degree would widen their job options by giving them the choice to switch to secondary teaching.

Because of the problems in Auckland, mentioned last year, of parking at the university and the time-consuming travel, students made appreciative comments about the courses held on the college campus.

Many students also felt that the university courses were a help to them in doing their college work as it often gave them a different perspective on issues.

In contrast to Auckland and Wellington, there has been a slight decrease in the actual number of students taking university study in Christchurch. However, of the three colleges, they still have the highest proportion of students enrolled at university. The main problem for Christchurch students enrolled in their B.Ed. programme is that they are spending a lot of time away from the college. They feel that they do not belong in either institution, the university or the college: they are not full-time university students, because they have commitments at the college, but they do not feel fully part of the college because they spend so much time at university. Some students also have a problem knowing with certainty what courses they need to complete for various qualifications. The structure of the B.Ed. course at Christchurch has now changed.

The comments about university study which were made by students at all three colleges were:

*   the high workload involved in taking on both courses

- the limits on choice placed on students by conflicting timetables in the two institutions
- the higher academic level of courses at university
- personal preference expressed for one institution or the other
- the different teaching style at university.

The Usefulness of University Courses

On the usefulness of university courses we asked students:

> *Do you believe the courses of university study you undertook last year and/or this year will contribute to your effectiveness as a primary school teacher? If YES, in what ways?*

Students in all three colleges are taking a wide variety of courses at the university. At Wellington the 14 students in our sample taking university courses are enrolled in a total of 32 courses, nine of which are offered by the Department of Education at the university. Of the 27 courses being taken by the 16 Christchurch students, six are education courses. In Auckland 16 students are taking a total of 20 courses, 10 of which are offered by the Education Department of the university (a full list of courses taken is in Appendix 5).

When we framed this question, we envisaged that students would be inclined to say that those courses run by the Education Department in each university were the ones they found to *contribute most to their effectiveness as a primary school teacher*. But in fact students felt that almost all the courses they had taken would do so and they gave no special emphasis to education courses.

Thirty-six of the 46 students taking university courses felt that they would be directly useful to them in the classroom. Some students, for example, envisage using Shakespeare plays and works by New Zealand authors with children in their classes.

In addition students felt that their university courses contributed to their effectiveness as teachers by

- giving the student confidence in their own academic abilities
- enabling the student to pick up organizational and research skills
- providing the student with greater self-motivation.

Students Not Taking University Study

Of the 105 students in our sample this year, 61 were not taking university study. The most common reason given (by 30 students) for not doing so was the extra fees and expenses involved in taking university courses. This compares with 14 students last year who said that the extra fees and expenses were a reason they were not taking university study. It is difficult to tell from these data whether the introduction in 1990 of higher fees at tertiary institutions was a barrier to any college students wanting to take up university study. The small increases in numbers in Auckland and Wellington taking university courses suggest that it is not a barrier; however, students seem to be perceiving it as such. Whilst students may genuinely feel that the higher fees are preventing them from enrolling in university courses, it may not have had any effect on the proportion actually doing so.

Students did give other reasons for not taking university courses. Other than the extra fees and expenses involved, the most common reasons given were:

- time factor (26)
- did not think they could cope academically (11)
- not necessary to be a good teacher (10).

STUDENT PROFILE 5

As Jill is doing the shortened two-year course this is her second and final year. Six months into her second year she says that on the whole she has enjoyed what she has done although she does feel that many of the courses could be better organized. So much is dependent on individual lecturers and courses that it is difficult to give an overall impression of the college. The inconsistency between different courses in their methods of grading is one of the things of which Jill is most critical.

Jill thinks the balance between optional and compulsory courses is about right and is pleased that she has had more choice in the courses she can take in her second year. On the other hand, she thinks there are some optional courses which should be compulsory. She feels that some students go through college without having addressed some of the basic subjects that they need to know. She planned her own course carefully, taking into account her own strengths and weaknesses and what she thought she needed to get out of the college. She thinks that with a two-year course there are still gaps in her knowledge. The same would be true for others in her group and she feels that this could have been rectified if more had been covered in the first year.

Jill is very satisfied with the tutor she has this year for professional studies, particularly when compared with the experience she had in her first year when she felt the time was largely wasted for her group. She thinks the college should be monitoring the experience students have with tutors in their professional studies groups. At this stage in their final year, students believe there is much for them still to learn and they are grateful for the help given them by their tutor who is always willing to arrange for outside speakers to talk about areas of particular concern to graduate students. They have had very useful discussions on such topics as classroom management. Jill has a mixed reaction to her subject studies courses. She enjoys mathematics so she has positive feelings about the subject and is impressed with the middle school mathematics course, which she considers is well organized and to the point, as was the junior course. As she says, it makes such a difference when the person taking the course has clear objectives and sticks to them. The English course which Jill is taking focuses on English as a second language and is excellent. The help given on how to recognize the needs of children who have English as a second language will certainly be useful in the classroom. Because Jill felt so positively about her mathematics lecturer she took two other courses also run by her - one on junior reading and one on teaching in the junior school. Both courses were good value. By comparison Jill regarded one of her other courses as a waste of time. This was partly because of an organizational problem. The course was for four weeks but apparently the lecturer expected it would be six weeks which added to the pressure. The lecturer also appeared to assume - wrongly - that the students had covererd elements of the course in the first year and Jill felt a lot of the content was above the heads of most students. The music course also got off to a sour start because students were asked to pay $10 for equipment which they did not think was worth that and were upset when told that they would not pass the course if they did not pay.

Of all the courses Jill has taken she thinks mathematics, junior school reading, and physical education will be the most useful for her in the classroom. She has seen many children in classrooms bored with mathematics and she is particularly pleased with the approaches she has been introduced to at college. The reading course has been very useful in helping students to set up a reading programme, to understand children's possible problems in reading, and to evaluate their progress. Physical education has been something of an eye-opener for Jill who regarded the subject as one of her weaknesses when she came into college. She hated physical education herself because she was not well co-ordinated as a child and used to avoid it when she could. She now knows ways to adapt the physical education programme to suit the needs of all children instead of expecting them to fit into the needs of the programme as she remembers she had to do.

The curriculum areas where Jill's confidence has most increased are physical education, mathematics, and reading. She still lacks confidence in teaching music. She also feels much more confident about planning and management in the classroom, something she knew nothing about when she started the course, although she would still like more help with management of disruptive children. Although there is currently some discussion at the college on access to advisory services, Jill feels students need more knowledge on this matter.

Jill thinks students have been given a thorough introduction to ideas about how children learn through courses in the education department. She feels she is now more realistic and down-to-earth about how children learn than she was when she came into college, particularly through her experience on teaching practice sections. As she already has a degree in education and has children of her own, Jill feels she knows enough about how children learn and is more interested in concentrating on what they learn. She thinks her own personality and also the way she has handled her own children are the greatest influences on her own teaching style. The teacher she had on her last teaching practice also taught in a way which she feels she could adopt.

Jill thinks that over all the college focuses on both the individual development of students as people and on students as classroom teachers and that the balance is about right. However, she does not feel she herself is well known as an individual, especially by management and while she could understand this at the beginning of the course, she feels that this should not still be so half way through her final year. One of the problems is the large classes, particularly in the second year, because of staffing shortfalls. Jill is nevertheless critical of the fact that the college organization is such that lecturers often do not seem to know how many students to expect at the beginning of courses. Lecturers arrive with too few handouts, for example, even though the students have pre-enrolled.

Jill had quite a few critical comments to make about assessment in the college. She feels that although it may sound petty, she came to the college motivated to work really hard and do well because she is satisfied when she does a good job. She feels the standards at the college are somewhat lax and credit is not always given for hard work. She thinks it unfair that students who do not put much effort into their work still pass. She thinks assessment methods of teaching practice would be improved if, as well as the associate writing a report, the students were also able to comment on their experience. The reports from section are important in terms of the assessments tutors make of students but the students themselves do not have the opportunity for much input, particularly if they think they have been unfairly regarded because of a personality clash or differences in teaching style on section. She is very critical of an administrative problem last year with assessment in social studies. Jill got a top grade with which she was pleased but the results were lost because of a computer breakdown and, as a consequence, all the students received a pass. The lecturer, who has since left the college, told the students he 'didn't care a stuff about grades'. This highlights Jill's concern that there is no consistent policy within the college on how students should be assessed, some lecturers using grades and others pass/fail. In Jill's view, when lecturers use pass/fail assessment, students do not make the same effort. As far as assessment of children is concerned, Jill feels this topic has been covered in reading, mathematics, and physical education but she thinks students should also have been introduced to the new progress and achievement records.

Jill does not feel her views on most of the equity issues we raised have changed, apart from perhaps socio-economic status. This is because of a heightened awareness of the difference it makes to children who have parents either not interested in their child or so busy working that they lack the time to help their children with their school work, and 'just the whole opportunity money can buy'. Jill also feels her understanding of the problems faced by Maori children in the education system has increased and she is more inclined than she used to be to get angry with narrow-minded people who are racist in their attitudes.

She does not feel there has been much discussion in the college of changes going on in the school system. Any knowledge she has, she has picked up on section or through the experience of her own children.

Now that the course is nearing completion, Jill is really looking forward to having a class of her own to teach. She is even more motivated to be a primary teacher than when she began the course and feels confident and well organized provided she gets a position with a junior class. Looking back she thinks the course was about the right length but she did think that in the first year time was wasted and opportunities missed. She was particularly critical of a 'laid back' language course in the first year where there was 'a lot of talk and a little creative writing', resulting in a waste of six months. As a parent who made a real effort to get to college Jill is irritated by time wasted. The highlights of the two years have been this year's professional studies course, which has already been discussed, and different ways of taking specific subjects, for example, outdoor education and art. Sections have been very important. Jill has also greatly enjoyed the support from other students, particularly other married women in her tutor group who, apart from other things, share resources and hope to keep in touch in the future.

STUDENT PROFILE 6

Sony is a graduate student nearing the end of her course. Even though she was a mature student on entry to college she has gained much in terms of her own personal development. The college has given her the chance to experiment with many things she has wanted to do for years and other things she has wanted to return to, particularly in the creative arts. Sony had an interest in special education before she came to college and that interest has been sustained through her training. She has never really wanted to stay in the classroom as a classroom teacher but her philosophical approaches to teaching have definitely developed - more from being in classrooms than from experiences at the college. She does not feel that 'any shock waves' have changed her drastically.

Sony thinks the college is particularly strong in the arts and that it is easier for students here to tap into resources than in other tertiary institutions. The university, for example, has a drama department but the department at college is more accessible to students. There is a positive atmosphere which allows students to experiment and they get credit for what they do.

Sony has two main areas of concern about the college. The first is what she considers to be a lack of critical thinking among students and staff. She does not think lecturers are critical of themselves nor does she believe the college helps students to evaluate themselves. Sony's second area of concern is with mathematics teaching, although she acknowledges she may also be at fault because she has not gone out of her way to do courses in mathematics. She does not feel adequately equipped for the classroom on the basis of the compulsory courses she has done. Part of the explanation is a lack of cohesion and co-ordination within the department. Sony compares mathematics with science where there was also only one compulsory course but that course was consistently taught and students knew what was happening from the beginning to the end. She considers the teaching methods in the science department are excellent.

Of all the courses Sony has taken at college she thinks that physical education 200, professional studies 300, and science 200 will be the most use to her in the classroom. She thinks the physical education lecturer is an excellent role model and that the professional studies lecturer really cares about what happens to the students. The interactive approach in science has made students think. Sony is very interested in mime and dance and she found both courses fun and helpful. She also learnt a lot from a course on Pacific Island music and dance. Sony believes she was lucky to have 'one of the better lecturers' for Maori language. She is by no means fluent, which disappoints her, but she has increased her understanding. Sony is not particularly sympathetic with the students who are critical of the Maori department, especially its teaching of the language. She feels that if, instead of complaining, students had spoken to the lecturer concerned something could probably have been done about it. Sony thinks that lack of staff make it difficult for the Maori studies department to enable more students to learn the language. She thinks it would be 'really brilliant' for students completing the course to be bilingual but realizes that this is an unrealistic expectation. Sony also acknowledges that her own background with a degree in French and an interest in linguistics puts her at an advantage when it comes to learning a second language. On a completely different note, Sony says she came into the college lacking in computer skills and is going to leave the college in much the same state despite having done a computer course. The course did help but she is astonished that the computers used were so out of date. She thinks the wide range of courses has been great for her and that the balance between compulsory and optional courses is about right.

Sony does not think the college course focuses equally well on the individual development of students as people and as future classroom teachers. She has gained more from the course at a personal rather than a professional level. She wonders if she has not picked up more through two years' experience as a teacher's aide than through the college programme. She thinks the college should focus more on the professional development of students.

Sony agrees with the college practice of not assessing students by using grades. She believes this is consistent with what students are being taught in terms of how children should be assessed. This does not mean, however, that students should not be looked at critically and should not analyze their own achievements. She reiterated her view that there is a lack of critical analysis as to what students have achieved. She thinks the assessments she has received have been fair, but then she chose her lecturers with care and had some excellent ones. Professional studies lecturers have been good at helping students understand the various mechanisms for assessing children.

Sony is particularly well qualified academically, having done a diploma of teaching as well as a bachelor's degree in languages. This background undoubtedly contributed to her feeling that the course dragged from time to time. Sometimes she felt it was far too long for her but on the whole she is glad to have spent as long as she has done in the college. She is not sure how long she will last in the classroom. This is partly because of her interest in dance which she would like to explore further before she gets 'too old and rickety', and partly because she is uncomfortable with some of the things she perceives as going on in primary school classrooms. She feels there is too much control, with children being expected to behave in certain ways in order 'to get on' and she is uncomfortable with this attitude. Her interests are really 'on the fringes of education'. She may do a stint in the classroom but she is more interested in working with small groups and individuals rather than within the classroom where 'crowd control' comes in. Maybe she will end up working in dance therapy.

Sony thinks the college is sincere in its attempt to address the various equity issues raised in our study, but more needs to be done. Sexism, for example, is certainly discussed in courses such as gender equity but there is not sufficient focus on what students can do about sexism in the classroom.

Sony's own ideas about biculturalism have been clarified since she has been at college, largely through the people she has met.

Sony also feels she has been exposed to much more Maori culture than she ever has before. She feels this is partly because she herself was interested and that it is up to individual students to make the effort. If students want to know about Maoritanga there are people at the college to help them. On the other hand there are students who seem to have gone through the course oblivious to biculturalism, largely because it is an issue they would rather avoid than come to terms with.

The college tries to address racism but it is a complex issue and there is a certain amount of student resistance. It is such a personal and volatile issue in the current climate. Sony does not think the college does so well in making students aware of issues related to socio-economic status as far as school children are concerned. She thinks New Zealanders generally have yet to come to terms with the fact that there is much more poverty in our community than we are prepared to recognize.

When we raised the issue of the school reforms Sony said there were mixed messages at the college among both staff and students, and certainly a degree of confusion about what was happening in terms of regulations and job opportunities for beginning teachers.

Sony says the most important influence on her own teaching style is her parents - just the kind of people they are. She has also been influenced by performers she respects, including her dance teacher. She does not think her views on how children learn have changed much since coming to the college. She realized before she came to college that all children are different and subsequent experience has confirmed this. Because children learn in so many different ways it is important for teachers to be flexible in their teaching approaches. Her college experience has certainly helped her to reflect on the teaching methods she intends to use herself.

With the course nearing completion, Sony feels she still has to do more reading to consolidate her own philosophy of teaching and to give herself a framework within which to work.

IMPRESSIONS OF GRADUATE STUDENTS[5]

One section of the year-two interview was directed towards students who, having entered the college at the beginning of 1989, were to complete their two-year training at the end of 1990. There was a total of 19 graduate students in our sample, seven in both Christchurch and Wellington and five in Auckland.

Length of Course

The majority of the 19 students felt that the two-year training gave them a good balance of time in college and time out in schools. Students spent an average of 20 weeks on section, in blocks of four to six weeks. The time on section was planned to enable students to see a range of classrooms. The graduate students appreciated having worked with children of different ages and having seen teachers with a variety of teaching styles and ways of dealing with children.

Each college provides its own individual programme for the time spent in college, and students made comments which applied only to their own institutions. A number of Christchurch students felt that the second year of their course was better than the first year: the material in the first year was sometimes too easy and there was not enough of it; the second year was much better with plenty of information of good quality that they found useful on section. This Christchurch student, and others, would have liked a better balance:

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[5] The term "graduate" student is used to describe a student who has completed or has almost completed a university course leading to a degree.

> But I do think a lot of time was wasted last year. It could have been 18 months long - well two years for the time you need on section. Last year a lot of it was a waste of time. They're cramming all this information into you now, which is brilliant, but we could have had a lot of it last year.

These comments can be related to the staffing situation at Christchurch as these students passed through their course. In the first year of their course the college was attempting to rectify a situation with its staffing whereby, by Education Department regulations (now Ministry of Education), they were deemed to be overstaffed. By the second year of the course approximately 30 staff, many of whom had worked at the college for a number of years and were close to retiring, had concluded redundancy agreements with the college which had taken on a number of new staff on contract, many of whom were young, with recent school experience.

Over all three colleges, however, students expressed very much the same sort of views on the length of their course. Whilst one or two thought the course should have been shorter, the majority felt two years was just right. No one wished for the course to be any longer. This comment from a student sums up the general view:

> I wouldn't want any more - I'm ready to get out there now. I think because we're different from the people who have just come from school. If you have just come from school then the three years is really good, but when you've been to university and studying education and things like that, two years is fine. One year would be too short but two years is just right.

It is natural for participants on any training course to be keen to get out 'into the real world' and try out the skills they have been learning in theory. As with this student:

> I'm quite enthusiastic about that [teaching her own

> class]. I want to get it over and done with because I want to decide whether I want to do it. You know, I want to be a teacher and I don't feel I can decide until I've got my own class.

Again the majority of the students, with only one or two exceptions, were looking forward to having their own class to teach. Even though students were interviewed in the middle of their second year and their course still had until the end of the year to run, most were confident of their teaching skills. There were a few comments from students who felt insufficiently prepared in specific areas. Mathematics and assessment were two that were mentioned, but these were also areas where students still had courses to take before they finished their training. There were more general areas, such as being able to keep control of the class, the workload involved in teaching, being able to keep the momentum of teaching going for longer than four weeks (the average length of a section), that a few students had apprehensions about, but all bar one were positive about coping in their own classroom. Although they were confident, about half of the students expressed an expectation that they would be able to cope with help from teachers already in schools, an aspect that we will be following through as we interview the students as year-one teachers. This comment from an Auckland student reflects the feelings of many:

> Quite excited about basically getting in there and giving it a go. It's not until you're in the classroom that you realise how much you have learnt. I should be OK with other people's help - still hopefully in a supportive environment in a school. On the other hand it is quite frightening!

Students were also asked:

What have been the most useful parts of the course for your career as a teacher?

A number of aspects of the course were mentioned by students, and these are listed in order, with the one mentioned by the greatest number of students first:

- teaching sections (Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch);

- interaction with other students, the sharing of resources, professional support (Auckland, Christchurch);
- individual courses (Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch - *see also* the question on the three most useful courses on p. 32);
- approachability of lecturers (Auckland, Wellington).

In general students who were due to graduate from the colleges at the end of 1990 felt that after two years of college they were ready to move out into schools and were looking forward to getting a job teaching their own class. They were feeling confident and generally well prepared to take on the task with support from practising teachers already in schools.

Group Interviews of Graduate Students

We have used group interviews twice in this study. In the preparatory stages we had sessions with final-year students who were not going to be part of the main study where we discussed with them the key issues which they thought should be raised with the incoming group of students as part of our research project. We carried out a second series of group interviews with graduate students in each of the colleges towards the end of their pre-service training. Prior to holding the group interviews we had completed our second round of interviews with the students in our interview sample, now in their second year. Within this group there were graduate students, roughly in proportion to the number of graduate students in our total cohort. However, because of the size of our interview sample the number of graduate students was necessarily small. While we were confident that we could generalize from the students interviewed to the cohort as a whole, we were less comfortable about attempting to make generalizations about the experience of graduate students on the basis of the 19 in our interview sample. We therefore held group interviews of graduate students to see if the opinions of the graduate students we had interviewed in our sample of students appeared to reflect those of graduate students overall.

The ways in which the three colleges organize their graduate programmes differ. In all the colleges graduate students in their final year mix with non-graduate students in at least some courses. In Auckland most courses for graduates are run separately. In Christchurch all courses, with the exception of professional studies, are fully integrated with those for other final-year students. The professional studies course is conducted in a separate tutor group with the course being adapted to reflect the needs of this group. In Wellington the programme for graduate and non-graduate students is completely integrated. In Christchurch and Auckland graduate students meet regularly in separate tutor groups; this does not happen in Wellington.

Our co-researchers within the colleges arranged for us to meet the graduate students. As with all aspects of the study, this was a voluntary exercise, but students were encouraged to participate. The time arranged in Auckland was an educational lecture time and in Christchurch it was the tutor-group time which meant that in both cases we had almost the total group present. In each college we had two group-interview sessions of about an hour with 15 students per group. We were less successful in Wellington. The interviews were arranged for November when the college course was nearing completion. Unfortunately, neither our co-researcher nor ourselves were aware that in early November only a few graduates would be present on the campus. Our scheduled session was the only session for which students needed to come to college that day and, not surprisingly, few decided to make the trip for a voluntary meeting. Although the numbers were small, the discussion we did have with the nine students who turned up was helpful.

Our method for conducting the group interview was to present, by way of overhead transparencies, summaries of the information we had gained from the graduate students within the larger interview sample. We invited the group to react to our findings and interpretations and to discuss the issues raised. Thus the discussion had a specific focus but was in itself unstructured. Although we wished to interact with the students ourselves, we regarded the purpose of the group interview as being to allow the students to exchange views and to respond to the ideas of the students already interviewed. The interaction between the participants was important. As with all qualitative research tools, group interviews have their strengths and weaknesses, but they fulfilled our purpose well. Judging by the comments of the students, some of whom wished there was time to come back for a second round of discussion, they found the chance to 'speak their mind' of value, if only in a therapeutic sense. One of the reasons why the group interviews were successful was because we were working with groups of people who did not have to establish themselves with each other and were used to working in this way. Perhaps discussions is a better label, in that we did not carry out another series of one-off interviews within the group, but rather facilitated conversation within the group. It is also true, however, that the problem of the one dominant speaker surfaced in one group and we had to be careful to seek other students' opinions. We are now more comfortable about generalizing about the experience of graduate students than we would have been if we had been confined to the opinions of the small number in our interview sample. What we have gained is a range of experiences and attitudes rather than quantifiable reactions. We were also mindful of the fact that when student groups are brought together in this way it would be easy for discussion to degenerate into 'gripe' sessions. One commentator has described such a possibility as '...an infectious downward spiral of shared awfulness' (Watts, 1987). From time to time we reminded the students that we did not want this to happen and we got the feeling that students were responsible in their comments and had a genuine concern to comment in such a way that the college programmes might be improved. It is true however, that students probably commented more on perceived weaknesses than on the strengths of the courses.

A major difficulty of group interviews for the researcher is recording the sessions. With two researchers present we at least had a check on each other's perceptions, but we were anxious to be part of the discussion rather than taking detailed notes. In Christchurch the audiovisual department had arranged to have the session recorded on video. In Auckland and Wellington we were grateful for the assistance of stenographers with cassette recorders as a back-up. All of these recording methods raised questions of confidentiality which we shared with the students, gaining their consent for our methods. Ideally we would have liked to have presented our analysis back to the group for comment but as they had left the college before the analysis was completed that was not possible. We did, however, arrange for report-back sessions to staff at the college before we prepared our final written report.

In Auckland 30 of the graduate students were present for our group discussion, in Christchurch 28, and in Wellington nine of the 40 graduate students. In all centres the students tended to confirm that the information we had collected from the graduate students in our interview sample was an accurate reflection of their own views.

What follows is a summary of the issues raised in discussion at the three colleges. Many of the issues are also raised elsewhere in the report.

Auckland Graduate Group Discussion

Issues Raised

Programme not specifically designed for graduates

* Graduate students have the impression that they are doing a condensed version of the three-year course planned for undergraduates rather than a specifically planned, two-year course for graduate students. As one student put it:

> The only reason the course is shortened is because the students have already been to a tertiary institution but staff don't take that

> experience into account when they plan the work.

A lot of time is wasted

- * There was a general view that time was wasted during the course. Sometimes this was because of poor course co-ordination and repetition, particularly between the first- and second-year programme, for example:

> The second language session was really a repeat of the first. I felt we really learnt nothing new. We have not got time to waste. The time could have been spent with choices of Extended Studies (EST). A whole semester of emptiness. We're desperate for knowledge.

Little recognition of composition of degrees

- * The college recognizes that graduates have degrees, but it does not acknowledge the fact that they have degrees in different subjects. Student competence in particular areas is not usually acknowledged. For example, one student with a music degree had to do a compulsory 50-hour course which she found a waste of time. There was some discussion about this among the graduates. If the 50-hour course is child based, it may be important for even experienced musicians to attend. One who had experience with the guitar said she approached the lecturer and was exempted to do other courses. Another said she had to endure compulsory recorder lessons. The course did not have practical application for teaching children. There was a general view that if students approach lecturers exemptions may be arranged, but that lecturers should ask what students did in their degree.
- * A second student with a degree in education found the college course a waste of time, although other students had gained exemption from education courses. Her view is that the lecturers should ask:

> They don't take our degrees into account. They assume you've got nothing when you come in.

Not enough flexibility for graduates

* The majority, but not unanimous, view was that there was insufficient flexibility, especially for graduates. This view was countered by students who had been granted concessions and consequently thought the college was quite flexible.

> Too much time is spent on what you have to do for us instead of what can we do for you. The emphasis is on fulfilling the college requirements rather than the needs of students.
>
> We need to fulfil our own needs and not the college needs. After the first year I had more idea of what I wanted and I spent the second year fulfilling the college's needs.

* Another student who had done psychology said a lot of the education content on behaviour was very familiar. A third student referred to a similar experience in Maori studies. She said she had taken Maori at university and found the Maori studies course a complete waste of time:

> I had learnt to speak Maori at university yet I had to spend five weeks on vocab.

Less compulsory: more extended studies

* The general view was that graduate students would prefer more of their time arranged around options with fewer compulsory courses. Students are frustrated because they feel they are missing out on courses being offered. They find the limitation on the number of extension studies courses they can take particularly frustrating:

> If you push it you can do three.
>
> I would like to do more maths but I can't do any more. You feel as though you are missing out.

* Students acknowledge the financial constraints imposed on the college but do not regard this as the explanation. The problem is the content of the compulsory courses.

> Mostly the departments haven't got their act together - the good stuff is not in the

> compulsory courses. Extension studies more useful.

- * Some students see the problem as being with 'the administration'.

> I was keen to skip the 50-hour course and get on to the good stuff. There was an alternative course and the lecturer was happy to have us but there was no way the administration would wear it ... Compulsory is compulsory.

Student input into planning and content of course

- * Graduates come into the college with considerable skills; they have a limited period of time; they are keen to make use of what is available. But the way the programme is organized means they do not have the range of choices that would allow them to make use of the courses offered.
- * By the second year, graduates know what they need.

Lecturer accountability

- * The researchers did not get the feeling that the graduates were an aggressively critical group. They were quite fair in their comments, but they did feel that lecturers were not always prepared to listen to criticism. They say they have given up making suggestions because lecturers 'get uptight'.

> As consumers we have responsibilities but we should also have rights. Teacher training is important. Lecturers are paid high salaries. They should be accountable. There needs to be a mechanism for monitoring staff. NOT JUST EVALUATION OF COURSES KNOWN TO BE GOOD ANYWAY.

- * A general view is that the college does a superb job of selecting staff appointed on contract.
- * There should be a formal mechanism for handling student criticism. Students had difficulty knowing the channels for registering complaints.

More practical experience

- * A weakness in the course is the lack of long-term practical teaching experience in schools. It was a general view that the experience students had in their first year of six weeks in a school with four weeks' teaching was excellent. It was also felt that assigning students to a school rather than to a class should be considered, with the opportunity for them to move around without causing offence to their associate.

- Graduates, although critical of courses which were not practical enough, are also concerned with intellectual content. They do not just want 'bags of tricks'. The theoretical issues need to be presented in such a way that students can see their relevance.

Co-ordination within and between departments

- Co-ordination within departments between first- and second-year courses should be improved. The language course, for example, had a better programme in the first year; the second year was a repeat of the first with a different lecturer.

> What we are doing now is a rehash of what we did last year.

Integrated curriculum

- There was a brief discussion on the need for an integrated curriculum within the college.

> The whole course is too fragmented. There is not enough emphasis on integration - social studies, health, language. We are not being trained for integrated programmes by the way we are ourselves being taught.

Length of course

- Students feel that two years is about the right length of time, but the time needs to be used more productively. Apart from anything else students need two years to get the feel of schools.

First teaching position

- There was a general view that the first position should be part of training.

Wellington Graduate Group Discussion

Students' Overall Impression of the College

- Students find it hard to generalize because of the range of lecturers and courses.
- The college is proud of its philosophy, which it considers to be different from other colleges.
- The general feeling among graduates is that the college is a supportive institution where staff are keen to see students go out as 'good' teachers with a concern for children. However, some students also have an overall negative reaction. The following quotes illustrate the contradictory nature of the graduate students' impression of the college:

> I think it is a really supportive institution. I feel very comfortable here and I will miss it. I've had a wonderful experience. I've learnt a lot and met some very good people. I think it's not an institution so much as a place to be.

> I was warned that I wouldn't enjoy it by lots of teachers and ex-teachers who have been to this college before and have dropped out. I've only got myself to blame because I was warned that I would dislike it. I didn't really enjoy it last year and this year I dislike it even more. I started off by doing lots of additional courses, filling in my timetable, but this term I've whittled things down. I'm doing exactly what I need to do and no more, because I've just felt that most of the courses don't live up to my expectations and I don't think the work involved is going to help me to be a better teacher. I don't find the work interesting so it all seems a bit pointless really.

> What I found challenging and now endorse was the concept that we are responsible for our own learning, but at times I felt lecturers used this as an excuse not to prepare their lectures

> well for us. On the whole I feel positive about the way the college is structured and the emphasis on self-development as well as teaching.

Issues Raised

General

- The college is an interesting institution where there is a wide range of different things to do.
- Some students have trouble knowing the plan to which the college is working: what the institution is on about; also there have been administrative problems at the beginning of each year.
- Excellent facilities are provided but some students choose to 'just cruise'.
- Exposure to different ideas is good for students.

Courses

- Graduate students considered that the introductory, lead-in part of the course in the first year was too slow. It could have been compressed as they felt they got into the 'guts' of the course early enough.

  The second year was thought by most students to be an improvement on the first year because:
  - there was more choice,
  - students recognized the value of constraints, for example, professional studies 300,
  - the course was more practical, and
  - the sole-charge experience was particularly valuable.
- The two-year length of course is right but more could be packed into the course which could be more practical and provide opportunity for students to avail themselves of more options. They would definitely not like the course to be shortened.
- Students appreciate the wide range of courses but this can lead to difficulty in sorting out their programme and some find it hard at the beginning of the year to get a clear picture of what the two-year programme will be

like.

- Some students have problems in meeting the course requirements. By the time requirements are met, there are in fact more constraints than at first thought.

  There is some confusion over constraints and optional subjects. The calendar is hard to read and staff cannot always answer student queries.

  The autonomy of departments means that the institution, and sometimes courses, lack cohesion. There is repetition and overlap.
- Graduate students expressed concern that the range of optional courses may be reduced and disappointment that, because of the limits to the number of courses they are able to take, they are prevented from joining courses which interest them when they have the time available. They appreciate that they have taken more than the minimum required but would have liked to have taken more.
- There are insufficient resources to fully implement the college programmes, for example, the Maori department is understaffed to carry out its role. This means that classes are too large. Maori staff also have many commitments within the wider community which influence their effectiveness in the college.

Staff

- Most lecturers are approachable but some are defensive and unnecessarily sensitive to criticism. For a few lecturers, graduate students appear to be a particular threat. Friendly relationships between staff and students, if they are regarded as 'pals', can inhibit criticism by students.
- There is a need for increased lecturer accountability:
  - courses do not always live up to the description in the calendar;
  - lectures and courses do not always meet their stated objectives;
  - students have to meet deadlines in handing in

assignments, but some lecturers are very tardy about returning them;

- not all lecturers are sufficiently concerned with concentrating on students' development as teachers (as distinct from personal development).

* Recent changes of staff responsibilities within the college mean that standards have improved and are less 'laid back'.

Assessment

* There is confusion about assessment and a lack of a college policy to which all staff adhere. Some poor work gets the same positive comments as good work. Some staff set course requirements and then accept lower standards which the students then work towards.

Equity

* Most students believe the college has a strong commitment to equity issues although there was a minority view expressed about the college attitude towards biculturalism. These students believe the emphasis should be on multiculturalism because students may later have to teach in schools with, for example, few Maori students but a high proportion of children from other ethnic backgrounds.

Integration or Separation

* Graduate students do not want to be in a group specifically for graduates; they prefer to be integrated into the rest of the college. In the first year they were separate and this led to resentment on the part of other students who regarded the graduates as a clique. As a separate group they were sometimes overlooked by the administration. (Graduate students did not have their group photograph taken!) This year has been a 'melting pot'.

There is a dilemma for the college. On the one hand, graduate students do not want to be separated out as a group. On the other hand, they do want a course tailored to their knowledge and expectations.

Christchurch Graduate Group Discussion

Issues Raised

General

- Students' experiences are very much coloured by their experience of various courses and lecturers. Because the combination of courses taken by particular students varies from student to student it is hard to generalize.
- The graduate students acknowledge that they are probably bound to be more critical than other students.
- Administrative mismanagement:
  - computer records;
  - courses were cancelled at short notice because there were too few students; students turned up for courses that did not take place; advertised courses not being run made it very difficult for students to plan their year's programme;
  - students have the feeling that decisions are made for administrative reasons rather than with student interests in mind;
  - some course requirements changed after the students had already done some courses (for example, multicultural);
  - in the first block there were not enough courses and classes were too full.
- Allocation of resources: there was some criticism of the way resources were allocated within the college, especially the amount spent on refurbishment and buildings. In terms of student needs they thought the money would be better spent on, for example, costs related to teaching practice to enable them to have more practical experience, if cost was a factor in minimizing this.

> They say they haven't the money for longer sections but they're going ahead with all these alterations which seem unnecessary. If you wander through this place, half the classrooms are empty.

* Roll of registers: the noting of student absenteeism was seen as a farce.

* Very poor liaison between college and university.

> This institution doesn't fit itself within the other one. I did extra work at university that I did not need to do. Very difficult to get time off here. It's the same with the B.Ed. You have the feeling that if you want to finish a degree you have to find the time outside of college.

Courses

1. General

* One outspoken student claimed there was so little intellectual stimulation around the place that he had become 'brain dead'. The first year, particularly, is not sufficiently challenging for graduates, who should have covered some of second-year course in first year. Too much time was wasted. In the students' view, the college does not fully accept that students come into the college highly motivated to train to teach and they want to get started straight away. They do not need a lengthy introduction to teaching.

* Optional courses tend to be of more value than compulsory courses. Students appreciate the higher proportion of optional courses in the second year.

* There were queries about why some curriculum areas have more compulsory courses than others, for example, why is educational media compulsory in both years and why is art compulsory for two years, but music for only one? Students should have more music.

* There is little co-ordination between departments in terms of educational pedagogy. The education department gives the impression that it is the only one to have heard about co-operative learning. Students go to course after course and hear about the same teaching methods.

2. *Graduate Experience*

* The college needs to look at the academic and other qualifications graduates bring to the college, and decide what they need to do to become teachers. They need to acknowledge skills graduates already possess, particularly in education, music, and mathematics. Graduates need teaching skills, and training in working with children, rather than curriculum content.

* There were not enough exemptions for graduates if they had done similar courses at university, which led to wasted time. Students claim, for example, that if you have a music degree you still have to go through the whole music programme:

> It is OK in a way. You may have a degree but at a different level. You don't necessarily know how to teach. You do have to look at the syllabus. You may have a degree but not have, for example, confidence to sing in front of children, so those are needs that have to be met. But lecturers should be able to say that because you have a degree, there are some sessions you don't have to come to and in that way you can channel your energies into something else.

* Graduates can learn from each other; there could be more planned sharing of resources.

3. *Practice and Theory*

* Practical experience: when is the most appropriate time in the course? There was a feeling among students for earlier, longer immersion so that they got a feel for what the issues were and what it is they need to learn. The progression of the college course does not

necessarily fit the students' needs.

Students would like:

- longer sections
- to be attached to a school rather than a class so that they can observe a range of teachers
- teaching practice sections to be linked with each student's developing philosophy of education.

* Despite the students' belief that more practical experience is necessary, students from one tutor group also felt they had not had enough discussion of philosophies of teaching. Curriculum courses, in their view, are usually based on what students would be expected to teach in the syllabus without giving them an overview. This particular group said they had been asked just recently about their own philosophies of education, whereas the other group had had at least two opportunities with their tutor to discuss their philosophy and one of these had been much earlier in the year so that they then had time to go through a process of refining.

* The perennial problem of relationship between theory and practice. Students are likely to claim that they have not had enough of either. Both could be met within the time available, but there is a difference between time allocated and time used effectively.

> There are philosophical issues and there are practical issues. Both need to be covered but they aren't covered adequately because the time isn't used efficiently. They could both be covered if it were. Instead we spend a lot of time repeating material.

4. *Professional Studies*

* According to students, there are not clear enough guidelines about what should be done in professional studies, or if objectives are set they are not necessarily met.

* For some students frustration about the quality of what they were getting in professional studies related to the signing of reports by professional studies lecturers. They felt this had a bearing on students as prospective job applicants. Their view was that school principals knew who the professional studies lecturers were and placed more value on the opinion of some than others, so that students could be unfairly discriminated against.

Staff

* One of the things all the graduate students have in common is to be placed in one of two tutor groups. The tutor groups appear to play a more significant role in the college programme in Christchurch than in the other two colleges, certainly for graduate students. The students valued the extra time available in tutor groups in their second year, but because the two tutors handled their sessions differently, the experiences students have in their tutor group coloured their reaction to their whole training. A key issue seemed to be whether or not the tutor followed up on student requests to have various matters related to their training and classroom experience discussed. A student in the group where the students were pleased with their tutorial experience summed up the group's experience:

> We do a lot of sharing. We learn a lot. Our tutor takes our problems on board. If you have a problem with job interviews or anything at all, "x" is always available. It's good to have someone to talk with. The personality of the tutor is a key factor.... Tutor groups are only one segment of the total college experience but it does bring everything together. We have four hours' compulsory and our tutor has put a lot of time in including helping with job applications.

* There was general agreement that there were some excellent lecturers at the college and that recent staff changes had mostly been by way of improvement, although staffing shortfalls did penalize this year's students.

It was a common view that there was a correlation between length of time away from the classroom and effectiveness as a lecturer. It was also felt that there were not enough checks on lecturer competence. Some lecturers need to be better managers of time and resources. There needs to be staff training of both lecturers and tutors. Because of the central importance of tutors to the graduate programme, they need to be skilled at working with adults. To have been a successful teacher of children is not sufficient.

* Lecturers' lecturing style:

- some lecturers do not prepare enough
- some rely too much on discussion, with too little content from themselves.

> Half the time you come out and think, "there's another hour down the drain". Things could be compressed. There's so much mucking around in the majority of classes. Lecturers should give clear expectations. Half the time you don't know what he is trying to achieve.
>
> Definitely too much discussion time and too little content.
>
> One group I'm going to, a student talks about something different each week - it basically takes up the whole course. It's relatively easy for the lecturer to co-ordinate but students are not experts ... there is a tendency among lecturers to get students into groups to discuss things. That has its place but the lecturers are the ones with the knowledge and experience. Personally, I would be quite happy to sit and have that imparted to me.

* The college is inclined to be protective of tenured staff.

> I think they are very protective of each other. Some have tenure and some are on contract. If you are a permanent forever, the departments protect you more than if you are a contract staff member - then you have to perform. Contract lecturers tend to be the ones that give the most relevant material.

Integration or Separation

* Graduate students say they have enjoyed the solidarity of being part of their group but they also enjoyed the fact that in their second year they mixed more with students in other classes. They do not want to be completely separated out as a group but they do believe that, with only 30 graduate students, the college should be able to provide a more individualized programme for them. At present they do not feel their programme is specifically designed for graduate students but is a three-year course condensed into two years.

College Aims

* Finally, the graduate students reacted with laughter when we asked them to comment on the college aims. They were amused to think that there was a printed list, considering the inability of the college to articulate its own goals.

Graduate Students' Reactions to Various Departments

It has been clear since the early stages of this study that students judge their college experience largely by the quality of individual lecturers. We have many positive comments from students about individual courses but there is also criticism of particular lecturers and departments within each of the colleges, although during our interviews we have stressed that we do not want students to identify lecturers by name. As we were interviewing graduate students for their last time in their college we were interested, in our group discussions with them, to discover whether there was any consensus amongst graduates about those departments they felt had been particularly helpful during their course of training and those of which they were critical. We gave the students a list of all the departments in the college and asked them if they would indicate whether their view of the department was an overall positive one, or whether they had a neutral or mixed reaction, or whether their experience had been largely negative.

We recognize that this is a crude measure and that, although we asked students to comment about departments, their experience of any department was probably limited to certain lecturers within that department. As we expected, students had a few problems, largely with the fact that they may have had a positive experience in one year and a negative one in the other - in which case they tended to mark the 'mixed or neutral' column. On the other hand, we were also surprised with how readily the students completed the form and with the clear patterns that emerged in Auckland and Christchurch. (This was not the case in Wellington because of the small number of graduate students we talked with and the wide range of courses taken by students.)

The findings have been discussed with staff at Auckland and Christchurch. Because of staff and course changes since we collected the data, we do not think it appropriate to publish detailed findings here.

STUDENT FINANCES

The financial situation of virtually all of the students in our sample has worsened over the year since we last interviewed them.

All of them are paying more fees for their education this year, with the exception of 10 students whose fees were abated for various reasons. Students have been able to meet these extra financial commitments primarily by working part-time and/or working in the holidays, taking out bank overdrafts or loans, and receiving financial help from their parents. (Wellington students say they receive help from their parents to a lesser extent than those at the other colleges.)

The number of students working part-time whilst studying has increased from last year. In Auckland 23 students are in paid employment compared with 16 last year; the comparable figures for Wellington are 14 (11), and for Christchurch 18 (17). Students are employed in much the same types of job as last year, and for similar hours.

What has increased significantly from last year is the number of students who have debts. Over all three colleges 64 students declared themselves to have debts. This compares with 27 students in 1989. Once again the majority of comments on finances centred on the general inadequacy of support.

CONCLUSION

We are aware that in some important respects our reports of this longitudinal study of teacher education are about courses of training that no longer exist. Since our cohort of students entered the colleges in 1989, there have been comprehensive changes in the courses in all three colleges. Some of the specific criticisms made by students in our reports will no longer apply. Others, however, raise important questions of policy and organization, for which colleges of education must always be seeking effective answers. It is in the context of that process of ongoing evaluation that we hope our reports have a contribution to make.

When we interviewed students in 1990, most of them were at the mid-point in their training. It is obviously too soon to draw conclusions about the students' experiences of their training but certain recurring issues or themes have emerged.

Teaching Practice

One of the most difficult issues for teacher educators is to marry the theory and practice of education. The importance for students of the teaching practice section is emphasized over and over again during student interviews. In this report it has been referred to in many sections, for example:

- students' increased motivation to teach
- the influence on students' teaching style

- their changed views of how children learn.

Students regard the school as the 'real world' of teaching and are anxious to get out there. It is clear, from student comments, that all colleges have problems in satisfactorily co-ordinating the teaching practice section with the college programme.

Course Content

We had many examples of students saying that the second year was more useful than the first because the course content was more relevant to the classroom. There are many possible reasons for this, including the fact that students are in a better position in their second year to make more effective use of material presented in lectures because they have developed greater confidence in the classroom. Students who thought the second year was an improvement on the first often believed that the introduction to their course of training in the first year was too long. This is not to say that students are opposed to discussing educational ideas and learning about educational theories but it does indicate that the more abstract educational ideas are not sufficiently well related to the more practical aspects of the training.

Has the Course of Training Made a Difference?

The question of the extent to which the course of training has actually made a difference to students in terms of preparing them to be teachers is one we will be gathering more information about in our next round of interviews but even at this stage in their training it is clear that for most students the college course has already made an important contribution. Whilst many students thought they had many of the qualities and abilities necessary to be a good teacher before arriving at college, the comments students make about the skills they have developed and the areas in which their confidence has increased indicate the contribution of the college programme. The same can be said for the change that is going on in students' attitudes towards teaching and learning, particularly in the movement from a teacher-dominated to a more child-centred classroom approach.

Modelling of Good Practice

Teaching adults is not necessarily the same as teaching children but we are surprised at some of the mismatches between what the colleges are advocating as good practice in the classroom and the approaches used in the colleges. One example is the lack of an integrated curriculum in any of the colleges. The college programmes are largely broken up into subject areas, with varying degrees of co-ordination within and between departments. Listening to students' comments, we see little evidence of an integrated curriculum. We wonder, for example, about the demarcation between English, language, reading, and in some cases professional studies courses.

Equity Issues

Selected equity issues were raised with students in both the pre-entry questionnaire and the later interviews. Our intention was to find out what students thought about these various equity issues before they began their training and then to monitor their experience of equity issues, and the ways by which their views changed, as they progressed through college and ultimately into their first year in the classroom.

Two years into the course, most students claim to have become better informed about the various equity issues and to be more open-minded; they accept that staff at the colleges are concerned with the issues and the students themselves tend to affirm the stated objectives of the colleges. There are two exceptions to this general trend. One is for a minority of students in each of the colleges to say their attitudes towards Maoritanga have become more negative because the college has 'come on too strong', making Pakeha students feel that they have to accept the burden of guilt for all Maori grievances. The second is a more common student view that the colleges are more concerned with biculturalism than multiculturalism, an approach which does not necessarily prepare students for work in multicultural classrooms.

This second student concern is part of a wider set of community perceptions. It has become a major issue of public debate whether bicultural relationships between Maori and non-Maori New Zealanders should be given a status of their own - and, indeed a prior status in public policy - or whether they should be considered as one example of inter-cultural understanding within a broader policy of multiculturalism. As part of the national debate over the Treaty of Waitangi, the former view has come to the fore since 1988, when we first interviewed the students in our sample. Not surprisingly, our students reflect differences that are strongly held in the population at large.

Assessment

There is a worldwide concern and debate about the place of assessment in the education system. Issues raised in the wider arena have certainly been reflected in what we have found in the colleges. The comments of the students raise questions about the purpose of assessment as well as criticisms of practices within their own college. The students have their own priorities which do not always match those of the college. Changes to the system of placing students in their first teaching position has changed the students' perceptions of their needs.

University Study

There is a move nationally towards a much closer relationship between universities and colleges of education with, in one case, a complete integration of the two institutions. When we began our study students could enrol for courses at both institutions. However, most students felt they were operating in two different institutions with little apparent co-ordination between the two, particularly in terms of the timetable and the content of courses. Nor did students feel they received much support for the extra workload they had undertaken. Two years later, there are joint courses being run on the college campuses, and all students accepted to train at Auckland College of Education are enrolled for the B.Ed. course. These changes mean that some of the students in our sample feel they are the missed generation. Those students we interviewed who are taking university courses are pleased that they made the choice to do so. The students are taking a wide range of courses and most find that the content of their university courses, as well as 'broadening the mind', is directly relevant to primary classrooms. Students not taking university courses say that they are not doing so because of the extra fees and expenses involved, but the fact that the numbers taking university courses in two out of the three colleges has increased slightly makes it difficult to conclude that increased fees are having a significant effect on the numbers enrolling.

Length of Training

It is too early in the study to comment on the appropriate length of training (based on student views and our perceptions of the students themselves). However, we have formed the impression that for a proportion of students in our interview sample the course is probably too long. Colleges have no doubt considered other ways of packaging their course of teacher education, but there certainly appears to be an argument for more flexibility with a 'step on, step off' arrangement to suit student needs, particularly if teacher education is seen as a part of lifelong learning, and for the pre-service component being supported by adequate teacher support and in-service training.

Quality of Students

We noted when we reported on the questionnaire completed by students before they began their training at the high proportion of them who considered they already possessed many of the skills necessary to be a good teacher. In interviewing the students in the year group we have sampled we were frequently impressed with the commitment of the students and their desire to become competent teachers. The colleges acknowledge the need for students to recognize individual differences among pupils; we doubt if the colleges are successful in planning programmes which recognize individual differences among students, including differences in what they bring with them to the college, and differences in the length of time it will take them to be ready for the classroom.

The Importance of Individual Lecturers

This study is concerned with the student view. We acknowledged in our first report that the relationship between students and staff was an interactive process, not a one-way street. Constraints of time and money meant that we were unable to gather much data from staff about their view of our student cohort, but in report-back sessions with some staff we have had glimpses of some of the constraints under which they perceive themselves to be working. These include, for example:

- Working within time constraints for courses which they consider to be too short for the content which ideally should be covered. Staff are particularly frustrated by so-called 50-hour courses which in reality often end up as no more than 36 hours of student contact time.
- Lecturers within departments who have to work to a brief prepared by other more senior members of staff. This is particularly the case with contract staff who may not be in a position to 'rock the boat' because they see their on-going employment as being in the hands of permanent staff.
- Frustration that there are insufficient associate teachers in the classrooms practising the methods they are advocating to students.
- Lack of co-ordination within the college may mean that particular departments believe they are 'carrying the can' for some concerns, for example, the college's commitment to equity and Treaty of Waitangi issues.

We do not expect many of the issues we have raised to come to staff as a great surprise. Many student criticisms will confirm problems staffs are aware of. Nor are the solutions always straightforward. Teacher education is a complex process, with many forces interacting at any given time. It would be an error on the basis of students' comments to suggest there were 'quick fixes' to concerns in teacher education. On the other hand, students tend to judge the college and their training to be teachers largely on the basis of personal contact with individual lecturers and their courses. But the effectiveness of these interactions is very much something that lecturers do in fact control. Individual lecturers do make the difference.

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APPENDIX 1

Report on Those Students Who Left College Before Completing Their Training

As outlined elsewhere, this study is following the cohort of students which started training in 1989. Some of the students who started the course at that time have subsequently left the college before completing their course. It seemed to us an important part of evaluating the cohort's reaction to the course to obtain some idea as to why students who start the course leave before completing their training. We therefore obtained from the colleges details of those students who, for whatever reason, had left the college since starting in 1989.

The lists included students who had officially resigned from the college, and students who had been granted leave from, or a deferment of, their studies. Taking leave or deferment enables students to return to the college at some future date to resume their course. Included in this group are those who are on leave to undertake full-time university studies, those on maternity leave or sick leave, those on leave for other personal reasons, such as caring for dependants, and those who are asked to take leave to reconsider their suitability as teachers. Some of these students do not in fact have any intention of returning to the college and have taken leave 'just in case'. The college records give a reason for each student who leaves the college. We were interested to verify these records by speaking to the students ourselves.

We decided to contact all the students on the lists, whatever their official status and reason for leaving, and find out whether they had any intention of returning to the college. Students confident of returning were not interviewed, but all those students who indicated they would not be returning to the college, or were unsure whether they would return, were asked if they were willing to be interviewed.

The interviews were carried out by telephone during

November/December 1990.

Those contacted were asked

- their reasons for withdrawing from their course
- how they felt about the decision at the time and how they felt about it now
- whether anything would have changed their decision to withdraw
- what they have been doing since they withdrew
- whether they are interested in returning to the college
- about future work plans
- for general comments

The table below gives the numbers of students whose names were given to us by the colleges as having resigned or taken leave, and the number of students who were actually interviewed.

Table 9

Number of Students Interviewed After Leaving College

College	No. of names given	No. of students contacted
Auckland	60	26
Wellington	39	14
Christchurch	20	6
Total	119	46

Just over a third of the students were contacted. As with the unsuccessful applicants, many of the contact addresses and telephone numbers that had been left with the college were no longer applicable and students could not be contacted.

Main Findings

NB: Because of the low response rate these findings are subject to bias.

- The two major reasons given for withdrawing from the course were, firstly, that students felt that they had made a wrong career choice, and secondly, that in their opinion, the course does not prepare students for the reality of teaching.
- Respondents felt the decision they had made to withdraw was the right one.
- The majority of students had discussed their situation with family and friends outside the college rather than with lecturers or counsellors at the college.
- Those students who had left because of dissatisfaction with the course felt that their problems were common to other students.
- Most students felt that nothing the college could have done at the time would have changed their minds as they had made up their own minds to leave.
- Two-thirds of the students were positive about returning to the college at some stage, although half of these wanted to do other things before they did so. Fewer than one-third of the students were quite definite about not returning.

Within the interview sample were a majority of students who had made their own decision to withdraw and a small minority who had had their studentships terminated. The data have not been analyzed separately for these two groups.

Because of the poor response rate and the resources available, the decision was made not to continue with this part of the project.

APPENDIX 2

Unsuccessful Applicants to Teacher Training 1989

The study *Student Progress Through Colleges of Education* has involved following, in three teacher training institutions, a cohort of trainees who applied to colleges in 1988 to commence their training in 1989. Under the selection system that was in operation in 1988, all applicants who were judged eligible for entry to colleges of education were interviewed as part of the selection process. In order to provide a more complete picture of who was and who was not selected for teacher training in that year, those students who were interviewed, but not offered places to commence their training in 1989, were sampled and asked to complete a questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to provide us with information on what applicants had done since being turned down for teacher training, and to give us their views of the selection process.

The Sample

We drew random, matching samples of approximately 120 unsuccessful applicants from each of the three colleges in our main study, Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch. There were approximately 800 unsuccessful applicants to the Auckland Education Board and 400 to each of the Wellington and Christchurch Boards.

Response Rate

A postal questionnaire was sent out in July 1990 to the sample of 360, and two reminder letters were sent out at monthly intervals. One hundred and eighty-two completed questionnaires were returned, an overall response rate of 51%. The return rate by college is shown in Table 10. As with our main survey, the response rate from Christchurch is higher than from the other two colleges.

Table 10

Response Rate by College

College	Response rate %
Auckland	47.5
Wellington	49.1
Christchurch	55.0
Overall	51.0

Many of the questionnaires sent out were returned to us because respondents were no longer at the address supplied from Education Board records.

Some of the findings from this group were:

- A greater proportion of males applied than were accepted; 28% of the respondents were male and 77% female (6% did not state their gender). This compares with a 19% male, 81% female breakdown for the cohort of successful applicants to the three colleges.

- Over the three colleges there is an imbalance in favour of younger applicants; however, when these figures are broken down by college, Christchurch contributed most to this imbalance by accepting a large proportion of its applicants who were under 20 years of age. Only a third of the unsuccessful applicants to Christchurch were in this age range, compared with 58% of their successful applicants.

- Students from private single-sex schools and from integrated co-educational schools were proportionately less successful in obtaining a place than students from other schools.

- Most unsuccessful applicants went into another form of training, or full-time employment or full-time university.

- The majority of comments of unsuccessful applicants reflected dissatisfaction with either the interview itself, the racial bias they perceived, or the personal rejection they felt.

A number of points need to be made about the accuracy of these data.

Because of the low response rate we do not have a complete picture of unsuccessful applicants to colleges and these data do not therefore allow us to make true comparisons between those who applied to colleges and those who were selected.

It is difficult to get an accurate overall picture about who was and who was not selected because the data show up quite marked differences between the colleges.

Some of the differences between the colleges seem to relate to the catchment area within which the colleges operate rather than the effects of any selection procedures.

The data are historical. Colleges are now responsible for selecting their own students, and the statistical data they have collected do not support some of our findings.

The Advisory Committee for the project made the decision not to continue with this part of the project for two main reasons. Firstly, the response rate in future years is likely to be even lower than initially; secondly, and more importantly, because the system of selection has changed so much since this group of students was part of the process, any findings would be of historical interest only and of little value to those currently involved in selection.

APPENDIX 3

Checklist of Reasons Why Students Chose Particular Courses

A. It was compulsory/constrained.
B. It was my major.
C. You were particularly interested in that area.
D. You felt you needed help in that area.
E. You had skills in that area.
F. Other courses you wanted to do were full up/closed.
G. Timetabling difficulties.
H. University study.
I. Personality of lecturers.
J. Later career in mind.
K. Enjoyment.
L. Outlet for own expression.
M. Facilities/amenities in Department.
N. Finances - cost.
O. Acted on advice (please indicate from whom).
P. Other (please specify).

APPENDIX 4

College Policies on Assessment

AUCKLAND COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
REPORT OF THE ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE
May 1991

Introduction

The assessment of student progress at the College is an on-going developmental process. Some student learning develops with repeated practice over a period of time, other learning is more discrete. We recognize that the assessment of professional development is more than the sum of a student's achievements in a wide range of isolated tasks. It includes an assessment of a student's ability to make professional decisions, work with others professionally, and to demonstrate a number of personal qualities expected of them when they enter their chosen career.

We have agreed that assessment is:

formative:	giving students feedback about their progress in developing the knowledge, skills and professional attitudes expected of graduates about to begin their first year of practice.
summative:	describing students' attainments at the end of a course, programme or period of training.
educative:	contributing to and furthering the students' own learning.
evaluative:	providing information about the appropriateness and effectiveness of the courses in assisting students to meet the goals of their courses or programmes.

The report *Tomorrow's Standards* states nine principles which apply to assessment and evaluation (*see* Appendix). We believe our recommendations are in keeping with these principles.

Recommendations

A. Purposes of Assessment

We recommend that all schools of the Auckland College of Education adopt the following as a statement of the purposes of assessment.

The purposes of assessment at ACE are:

1. to assist students in identifying their areas of personal and professional growth and areas requiring further development in relation to the goals of their programme.

2. to report on the achievements of graduates relative to the roles they may assume on their first appointment.

3. to help students continue their own learning.

4. to evaluate the effectiveness of courses in contributing to the achievement of programme goals.

B. Programme and Course Goals, Objectives and Student Experiences

We recommend that all course assessments should contribute to the professional development of each student in relation to their achievement of programme goals. Therefore:

1. each programme should have a statement of its goals, objectives and student experiences that relate to the roles students may assume as beginning practitioners.

2. each course makes a unique contribution to a student's programme. For each course, goals, objectives and experiences should be seen as a co-ordinated subset of those stated for the training programme as a whole.

3. in all courses there should be a statement indicating which goals, objectives and experiences will be assessed in college and which will be assessed during practice periods in schools or other institutions.

C. Methods of Assessment and Assessment Tasks

We recommend that all methods of assessment, and the tasks to be assessed, should be relevant to the programme goals and student needs, and be conducted in the most appropriate, contexts. Therefore:

1. all assessment methods should be valid and relate to perceived student needs.

2. all assessment tasks should indicate which goals or objectives are being assessed and, where appropriate, include statements of the criteria by which judgements will be made.

3. students should experience a wide range of assessment methods within their programme.

4. students should have their progress assessed by staff, associates, and peers, and should also develop the ability to assess their own professional development.

5. the assessment of some tasks should be on-going in order to assess student change and development during the period of a programme.

6. there should be a measure of compatibility in the reporting of assessment of students' progress in their various courses.

7. all assessments should contribute to the student's progress profile.

D. Reporting Individual Student Progress

We recommend that in order to assist students with their learning they should be given regular feedback about their progress towards achieving programme goals. This on-going assessment of students should be the basis for making decisions about the courses they take and contribute to a student's progress profile. Therefore:

1. during the selection process, in the early part of a student's programme and at designated check points there should be an assessment of student needs in relation to programme goals to determine the most appropriate courses to enable a student to meet those goals.

2. the nature and/or length of a student's programme should be related to this needs assessment.

3. assessments should report a student's progress and indicate areas needing further development.

4. all assessments of student progress should be descriptive, and be able to be substantiated with supporting evidence. A descriptive statement may be accompanied by a grade where appropriate.

5. all assessments should contribute to a student progress profile.

6. students who fall to meet acceptable standards in components of a course should be given opportunities to repeat tasks. Failure in one component of a course should not necessarily result in a failure of the course as a whole but would be recorded in the descriptive assessment of the student's work.

7. final reports on students should be in the form of descriptive statements relating student performance to the goals, objectives, content and learning processes of the student's programme.

AUCKLAND COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

ACE CORPORATE PLAN

SCHOOL SECTOR PLAN

Requirements for
Those Graduating

Selection of Students

PROGRAMMES

Directors of
Schools

Programme Goals

COURSES

Convenors of
Departments

Selection of Courses
by Students

Course Objectives

Assessment Tasks

College and Practice Based
Specific and Developmental

Student Progress Profile

STUDENT REPORT PROFILE

Requirements for
Those Graduating

Principles of Assessment for Better Learning

From: *Tomorrow's Standards*

1. The interests of the students shall be paramount. Assessment should be planned, implemented, and reported in ways which maximize benefits for students, while minimizing any negative effects on them.

2. The primary purpose of assessment should be to provide information which can be used to identify strengths and guide improvement. In other words, it should suggest actions which may be taken to improve the educational development of students and the quality of education programmes.

3. Emphasis should be given to identifying and reporting educational progress and growth, rather than to comparisons of individuals or schools.

4. Every effort should be made to ensure that assessment procedures are fair to all.

5. Adequate involvement of all parties affected is essential to the credibility and impact of assessment processes.

6. Self-assessment is the appropriate starting point for assessment.

7. Careful consideration should be given to the motivational effects of assessment practices.

8. Appropriate assessment of the effectiveness of schooling requires sensitive attention to many factors.

9. In the assessment of intellectual outcomes, substantial attention should be devoted to more sophisticated skills such as the understanding of principles, applying knowledge and skills to new tasks, and investigating,

analyzing, and discussing complex issues and problems.

WELLINGTON COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
TE WHANAU O AKO PAI KI TE UPOKO O TE IKA
EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT POLICY

Introduction

In this college trainees are assessed using *Descriptive Assessment*. Performance is described relative to course objectives. The system is non-comparative, and does not involve students being ranked, or being assigned to positions on a normal curve. Self-assessment is valued and trainees as well as lecturers participate in the writing of report statements. No predictions are made about performance.

Reports

Three types of reports make up the formal recording component of the assessment process. A formal record of the trainees' progress in their college programme is maintained by the Academic Registry.

The three types of report are:

1. *Course Reports*[6]

Course reports form the basic component of the assessment system and are written at the end of all courses. A standard report-form which addresses three assessment aspects is used. These aspects are:

- self-assessment in relation to course objectives,

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[6] As at July 1991
The course reporting system is under review at the moment in conjunction with a review of the whole programme. It is likely that the summative course reports will be replaced by a simple coded level of achievement based on criteria ranging from outstanding to unsatisfactory.

Descriptive formative assessment would then be given within all courses from lecturers to student, but these copies would not be held by the Academic Registry.

Each graduating student would be given an overall profile statement of achievement based on the criteria established from the Desired Outcomes of Training statement.

- lecturer assessment in relation to course objectives, and
- lecturer assessment in relation to a set of general professional qualities.

Trainees receive copies of their course report-forms, as does the Academic Registry, and the trainees' academic advisers. Departments, through the course lecturers, also maintain a record of trainees' participation in their components of the various college programmes.

2. Progress Reports

Progress reports are usually completed midway through and at the end of each academic year. These summarize and review the trainees' progress as described by all course and teaching-experience reports received in the period since the previous progress report. They are completed during interviews involving trainees and their academic advisers.

These reports are used by trainees, academic advisers, intake supervisors, and the programme director, to monitor progress towards meeting:

- programme requirements as set out in the college calendar. For example, development of a major and a minor selected study; balance of vocational/selected study courses; passing of constraint courses; meeting teaching experience expectations.
- trainee professional needs as these become apparent;

and to formally record professional success.

Copies of progress reports are held by the trainees concerned, their academic advisers, and the appropriate intake-supervisors.

3. Final Reports

These reports are a collation of the information contained in the progress reports that have accumulated during a trainee's time in a college programme. They set out:

- a very brief description of the trainee

- the number of units of study credited in both vocational and selected studies (according to curriculum area)
- a summary of teaching experience successfully completed
- a final profile of a trainee in relation to the general professional qualities considered in the course reports.

These reports are completed by academic advisers in consultation with their final-year trainees who are able to state their professional interests and strengths.

Note: A transcript of completed university study is attached to this report if applicable.

CHRISTCHURCH COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS - POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Principles of Assessment

1. The interests of the students should be foremost.
2. Assessment procedures should be fair, equitable, consistent and in keeping with required standards.
3. Assessment should be an integral part of the teaching-learning cycle. Assessment should enhance learning and define achievement.
4. Formative assessment information should not be used for judgemental or political purposes if such use could disadvantage students.
5. Self-assessment should be integral to the assessment process.
6. Assessment should stress the competency of students to understand, apply, analyze, synthesize and evaluate complex issues and problems.
7. Assessment should be achievement-based against prescribed standards stated in course outlines. Criteria should form the basis of formative assessment and should be used in the writing of student profiles.
8. Assessment tasks and methods should be appropriate to what is being assessed.

9. Assessment methods and criteria should be available to students at the beginning of each course.
10. All interested parties should be consulted on assessment practices.

What is Achievement-based Assessment? How Does it Work?

There is a worldwide trend towards reporting students' achievements by describing what they can do. Students' performance is assessed and reported in relation to specified criteria. These criteria provide students with goals to aim for and against which their current performance can be identified. A student is described according to the criteria which then form a descriptive profile of achievement.

Objectives (competences) are central to planning. They describe what we want students to achieve. Criteria stem from the objectives and describe the levels of achievement of the objective. Criteria can be established for a mastery level and for exemplary performances. There are two basic ways of making such distinction:

1. A set of core objectives are defined as essential for mastery with additional skills being required for exemplary performance.
2. An objective is described using hierarchical criteria with a certain level essential for mastery but with higher levels being possible.

Recommendations

We recommend that:

1. There be a commitment to an achievement-based assessment system.
2. All parties involved in course development be required to consider and monitor assessment methods, practices and criteria in all aspects of their role.
3. An appointment be made to the position of curriculum and assessment co-ordinator to advise and assist staff in developing and monitoring achievement-based courses and to promote research into assessment methodology.

4. Staff development implications be accorded top priority during 1990, 1991, and 1992.

Implications

1. Different programmes/courses will develop systems appropriate to their students' needs, e.g., three-year courses may begin with basic competencies and build towards higher levels of achievement over time.
2. Records will manage cumulative descriptions of student performance. They must also generate the basic content for summative profile reports of a student's functioning at exit level.
3. There must be a commitment to profile reporting of clearly defined student achievement.
4. There will be a need to establish student competencies at the beginning of each course and plan and account for progress from that point. Different students will progress at different rates.
5. The current course structure of 24-hour modules does not provide sufficient time for students to master and lecturers to assess a range of achievements.
6. Extensive staff development in course writing and achievement-based assessment methods will be necessary.
7. Lecturer workload in course development will increase if excellence is our goal. Once courses are developed and lecturers have competence and confidence in the system, workloads should reduce to current levels.
8. Clerical support for lecturers will be required.
9. In the transition, the major task for lecturers is to take objectives and develop criteria for defining achievement at mastery and/or other levels. Staff development must address this issue.
10. The educational community will need assistance in learning to use the profile reports in making appointments.
11. All of the committees and boards involved in course development and validation will need to ensure that

assessment is treated as an integral component of courses so that assessment practices, procedures and criteria are valid.

(By valid we mean that courses and their assessments are comparable between subjects at the same level and developmental from one level to another, are congruent with market needs, teach and assess the course objectives, are equitable, fair and consistent and in keeping with required standards.)

12. Where students enter college with qualifications and/or experiences equivalent to the requirements of college course they should gain credit up to a specified maximum and undertake courses of study designed to meet individual needs.
13. Assessment of teaching practice must be based on criteria specified for section assignments and for professional studies competencies.
14. Other issues to be addressed include student selection, course evaluation, external validity and maintenance of skills.

Implementation

We recommend that:

1. The Academic Board accept this paper in principle as the basis for policy and procedure development for implementation in 1991.
2. Following acceptance, planning teams be established to develop policies and procedures that have college-wide implications.
3. Once college-wide policies and procedures have been defined, programmes advisory committees plan for implementation in 1991 and beyond.

CHRISTCHURCH TEACHERS COLLEGE

ASSESSMENT WORKING PARTY: RECOMMENDATIONS TO STAFF

Preamble

1.1 The Working Party's report, presented to staff in July 1986, endeavoured to achieve the following goals:

- to define the purposes of assessment within the College;
- to recommend that assessment within the College move away from "norm-referenced" assessment and towards "criterion-referenced" assessment in which the desired competencies are clearly identified and communicated to trainees;
- to confirm the Board of Studies as the ultimate authority for approving competencies central to each course, and approve the mode of assessment to be used;
- to establish procedures for:
  - monitoring assessment procedures,
  - recording trainees' assessments using either a grading system or pass/fail,
  - reporting assessments to the appropriate Director of Programmes, tutors and trainees, and
  - dealing with late work, failures and applications for aegrotat passes.

1.2 The terms of reference of the Assessment Working Party are set out in Appendix A.

1.3 Following a full staff meeting and discussions within departments, eight submissions were received. (*See* Appendix C for list of those who made written submissions.) These highlighted the widely differing views of the nature and purposes of assessment within the College. They were invaluable in enabling the revised report to reflect more closely the views of the overwhelming majority of staff on this issue. The

Working Party wishes to thank the individuals and groups who made submissions.

Definitions

In this paper, unless the context requires otherwise:

2.1 *Aegrotat* means that, where a trainee who has been prevented from completing a course, or who considers that his/her performance has been seriously impaired by illness or injury to himself/herself, or personal bereavement or any other critical circumstance, s/he may apply for aegrotat consideration. All recommendations for aegrotat credit shall be based on the work done by the trainee and shall be made only if the course lecturer is satisfied that s/he would, in the absence of the impairment, have gained credit.

(Adapted from *University of Canterbury Calendar*, 1986, p. 55-56)

2.2 *Competency* means that the trainee has demonstrated the ability to complete a specified task successfully at or above a prescribed level.

2.3 *Competency-based instruction* places a heavy emphasis on the trainee's ability to *do*. It assumes explicitness of objectives and assessment criteria.

2.4 *Criteria* means a prescribed standard against which a trainee's performance is judged.

2.5 *Criterion-referenced assessment* means a score which measures whether a trainee has or has not reached the established criterion or specified level of achievement. Such scores depend upon specifying an absolute standard of quality. This standard is independent of the scores achieved by other trainees completing the same test or course.

2.6 *Mastery* means the attainment of adequate levels of performance in tests that measure specific learning tasks. (Its underlying assumption is that nearly every trainee can learn everything in the curriculum at a specified level of competence if the learner's previous knowledge and attitudes about the subject are accounted for, if the instruction is of good quality, and if adequate time on the task is allowed to permit mastery. It also assumes concise, testable objectives, that clearly describe the criteria for mastery.)

2.7 *Norm-referenced assessment* means a score which measures a trainee's performance against the scores achieved by other trainees completing the same test or course.

Purposes of Assessment

3.1 Assessment is defined as the collection and use of information that supports decisions relative to the trainee or the programme. It should be pertinent to the aims and purposes of the College with regard to the judgements made on trainees or programmes.

3.2 Assessment involves setting criteria for the mastery of competencies required of trainees. Criteria to be made public and open.

3.3 Assessment enables staff and trainees to monitor progress through courses and enables staff to identify individual needs.

3.4 Assessment provides adequate and appropriate data to all involved in making decisions affecting persons or programmes.

Assessment Procedures

It is recommended:

4.1 That courses be criterion-referenced and that criteria be expressed in terms of competencies (as defined above in para. 2.2) which trainees should achieve.

4.2 That the Board of Studies approve assessment procedures, lists of criteria and methods of reporting results for all courses.

4.3 That assessment of trainees' work be a responsibility of
(i) the lecturer(s) teaching the course
(ii) Departments
(iii) the appropriate Director

4.4 That in differentiating between levels of competency, the emphasis should be on quality rather than quantity.

4.5 That a staff training programme in assessment be held early in 1987.

Monitoring of Assessment Procedures

It is recommended:

5.1 That in the first instance, course criteria and requirements be prepared by the course lecturer and/or department concerned. There should be provision for course requirements to be modified following discussions with trainees.

5.2 That, together with other details of courses, the *criteria* on which assessment is based and the *procedures* for evaluating the success of each trainee in achieving the set criteria, be submitted to the Board of Studies for approval.

5.3 That departments accept responsibility for monitoring courses, to ensure that the established criteria and procedures are adhered to.

5.4 That all courses be required to be re-submitted for approval by the Board of Studies at prescribed intervals.

5.5 That, once a course has been approved by the Board of Studies, course standards, including assessment procedures, rest with the Directors of Programmes.

Recording Trainees' Assessments

It is recommended:

6.1 That the symbols used for recording assessment of courses in all College programmes be as follows:

- Enrolled in course which has either not yet started or has not yet finished. (Note: temporary designation on printout - will not appear on transcript.)

W Withdrawal before completion of course. (Trainee has completed a substantial proportion of course hours - at least 50% - with satisfactory completion of all work required up to the point of withdrawal.)

For courses where grades are not given: (Credit/No Credit)

Cr Mastery, or requirements met, or

NC Mastery not achieved, or requirements not met.

* Course complete up to the assessment point, but further work still to be carried out and assessed. (Note: temporary designation on printout - will not appear on transcript.)

For courses where grades are given:

A,B,C. Pass credited to trainee's record, or

D,E. Pass not credited to trainee's record.

[Assessments of assignments, tests, etc, within courses may be made using a wider range of symbols (eg: + or -), as decided within each department.]

* Course complete up to the assessment point, but further work still to be carried out and assessed. (Note: temporary designation on printout - will not appear on transcript.)

Reporting of Trainees' Assessments

It is recommended:

7.1 That at the end of each quarter there be a due date for reporting assessments to Records of all terminating courses. All lecturers to be required to record assessments for all trainees in their courses using the range of symbols outlined in (6.1).

7.2 That at the end of each semester there be a printout of the results of all courses which finish during that semester.

- (i) A copy of the results for his/her group to be supplied to each tutor.
- (ii) Each trainee to be given a full list of his/her performance in each course using the symbols outlined in (6.1).
- (iii) The Directors to be supplied with printouts of results of all trainees.

7.3 That the Directors be kept informed of the names of the trainees causing concern.

Consideration of Work Presented Late

It is recommended:

8.1 That all trainees be entitled to be given notice of all work required of them well in advance of the date it is required to be handed in.

8.2 That, unless exceptional circumstances exist, all required work be presented to the lecturer on or before the due date.

8.3 That trainees be provided with the information above (8.1 - 8.2) in writing.

Procedures to Remedy Unsatisfactory Performance

It is recommended:

9.1 While a course is in progress, responsibility for establishing due dates for completion of course requirements rests with the lecturer(s) and trainees taking the course. The final deadline for the completion of all course requirements will be determined by the lecturer(s) and Director of Programmes, and notified to trainees in writing.

9.2 That if, at the conclusion of a course, trainees have not met the minimum requirements laid down, they will not be credited with a pass for the course and be required to repeat the course in question or pass another approved course in lieu thereof.

9.3 That, where unavoidable reasons for a trainee's failure to satisfy course requirements are deemed to exist, lecturers consider whether the trainee in question should be awarded an aegrotat pass in the course.

Procedures for Awarding an Aegrotat

Where an aegrotat is considered to be appropriate to a course, it is recommended:

8.1 That this be indicated in the course prescription submitted to the Board of Studies for approval.

8.2 That an aegrotat be granted only where exceptional circumstances exist which have prevented a trainee from completing all requirements of a course.

8.3 That the basic principle applying to the award of an aegrotat be as follows: That normally a trainee should be granted credit where, in the opinion of the lecturer taking the course, his/her performance to the point where the course was interrupted by exceptional circumstances was such that, had s/he continued to perform at that level of attainment over the remainder of the course, a credit would have been gained.

8.4 That in cases where an aegrotat is under consideration, the lecturer concerned make a recommendation to the appropriate Director for approval.

Euan Hundleby (Convenor)
Val Congdon
Len Cosson
Nikki Donaldson
Dinah Dove
Barry Eagle
John Fletcher
Kath Hollobon
Alan McRobie
Geoff Price
Jae Renaut
Lloyd Upton
Matt Warwick

28 November 1986

Appendix A

Christchurch Teachers College

Memorandum: All Staff

Working Party on Assessments

OBJECTIVES

* To define the purposes of assessment within the College.
* To determine a common and comparable means of recording and reporting student assessments in all College programmes.
* To make recommendations on assessment procedures which would be acceptable within the College.
* To develop a common policy on the treatment of late work e.g., specific time limits.
* To determine a common set of procedures to enable students to remedy failures in course work e.g., repeating courses etc.
* To develop a set of guidelines and procedures to be followed for the award of aegrotat passes.

- To make recommendations on the way in which assessment procedures can be monitored in the College.

E.R. Hundleby
Director of Primary Programmes 28 February 1986

Appendix B

Summary of Departmental Responsibilities

1. Production of course outlines according to policy requirements of the College. (If required, the Assessment Working Party will arrange for staff members with experience and expertise in developing objectives and stating criteria to advise and assist departments.)

2. Designation of Credit/No Credit or A,B,C, etc. (To be approved by Board of Studies)

3. Procedures to remedy unsatisfactory performance *within* a course.

4. Consideration of late work. It is suggested that the following procedure be adopted:

   Where a trainee believes that exceptional circumstances exist, these should be discussed with the lecturer concerned *before* the date set for receipt of the work. If circumstances make this procedure impossible the trainee should make contact with the lecturer as soon as possible. It is suggested that the extended due date be set by the trainee in consultation with the lecturer.

5. Consideration of aegrotat. (To be approved by Director of Programmes)

Appendix C

The following groups and individuals made written submissions to the Working Party:

- Art Department
- Ian Culpan (two submissions)
- Education Department
- Burt McConnell
- Roger Murdoch
- Ken Nichol (to Principal)
- 'Secondary' English Staff
- Social Sciences Department

APPENDIX 5

University Courses Taken by College Students

Auckland College of Education

Education
- Schooling, education, and society
- Language development
- History of education
- Special education
- The seriously ill child
- The reading process
- The sociology of education
- Child development and psychology

Social anthropology
Basic music techniques
Chaucer and Shakespeare
19th century literature
18th century literature
20th century literature
NZ literature
Introduction to the English language
Educational psychology
The history of race relations in NZ
Computer science

Wellington College of Education

Education
- 307, Maori education
- 309, Policy issues in historical perspective
- 305, Race relations and education
- 370, Issues in guidance and counselling
- 234, Educational psychology
- 111, Education and society
- 112, Human development

Anatomy 101
Physiology 102
Psychology 221, Individual and social psychology 2
Psychology 222, Experimental psychology

Art history 210, New Zealand and Australian art
Maori 101, Introduction to Maori
Maori 102, Elementary Maori
Maori 122, The peopling of Polynesia
Maori 123, Maori society and culture
English 223, Reading women writers
English 219, New Zealand literature
English 208, Shakespeare
Maths 215, Linear algebra
Maths 216, Analysis
Maths 206, Calculus
Biology 111, Cell biology
Botany 111, Biology of plants
Statistics 193, Statistics for natural and social sciences
Statistics 131, Probability and data analysis
Anthropology 104, Pacific society and culture
Courses run by the Department of Continuing Education
    - Science from a Maori perspective
    - Introduction to oceanography

Christchurch College of Education
Education 202 (psychology of)
Education 204 (sociology of)
Education 321 (language learning in schools)
Education 315 (exceptional children)
Education 105
Education 104 (education and society)
Classics 112 (Roman history)
Classics 111 (Greek history)
English 102
English 105 (New Zealand literature)
English 123
English language
Maori language
Maori 210 (written language)
Music 104
Music 105 (harmonies and textures 1700-1850)

Music 316 (music history)
History 108
History 109
History 234 (Australia and New Zealand since 1901)
History 250 (Aspects of history in Aotearoa)
History 235 (the Commonwealth)
Sociology 102
Economics 101
Art history 202 (rococo - romanticism)
Art history 203 (realism - post-impressionism)
Psychology 104